

## **Appendix E**

### **Public Involvement**



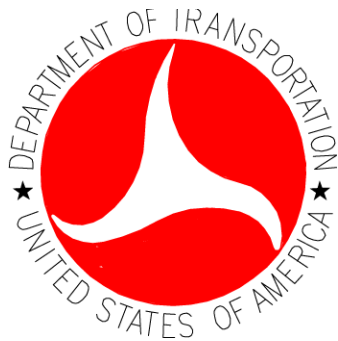
*SAFETEA-LU 6002 COORDINATION PLAN*

*REVISION NO 6*

*INTERSTATE 87 (I-87) EXIT 4*

*ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS*

*P.I.N. 1721.51*



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# Section 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of Coordination Plan

In an effort to provide for more efficient environmental reviews for project decision making, Section 6002 of Public Law 104-59 “Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), enacted August 10, 2005, implemented the development of a coordination plan for all projects for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The plan’s purpose is to coordinate public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a project or category of projects. This is the coordination plan for the Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 4 Access Improvement (formerly known as the Interstate 87 Exit 3/4 Access Improvement and Exit 3, Airport Connector) EIS.

## 1.2 Project History

The original Interstate highway system plan for the Capital District (late 1950's) proposed the construction of Interstate 687, also known as the Northway Connection. Interstate 687 was planned as an east-west expressway connecting Interstate 90 at Exit 5A (Corporate Woods) with Interstate 87 at Exit 3 near Albany-Shaker Road. Interstate 687 was also planned to provide an intermodal connection between the Albany Airport, I-87 and I-90. When the southern section of the I-87 was opened to traffic in 1960, a gap in interchange spacing and numbering was left between Exit 2 (Central Avenue) and Exit 4 (Wolf Road/Albany-Shaker Road) for the future Exit 3 interchange with Interstate 687.

Interstate 687 was never constructed due to changes in the State and Federal funding programs. The proposed highway was removed from the Capital District’s long-range highway plan in 1973 and withdrawn from the national interstate system plan in 1977. However, the elimination of Interstate 687 did not eliminate the need to address area traffic problems or the need to provide improved access between the existing interstate system and the Albany Airport.

Starting in the late 1970's and continuing into the early 1990's, a number of studies looked at existing and future traffic operations in the Wolf Road/Albany Airport area. A common recommendation among all of these studies was the construction of an Exit 3/4 Wolf Road/Airport Interchange. As a result of these studies, the Exit 3/4 Wolf Road/Airport Interchange project was added to Capital District Transportation Committee’s (CDTC) 1992-97 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in March 1992. The project is currently included as Project No. A240 on the 2013-2018 TIP. The project also was added to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) capital program.

The proposed project involves access improvements between I-87, Wolf Road, and the Albany International Airport. The project study area includes I-87 between Sand Creek Road and Exit 5 (RM 871 1108 2038), Wolf Road (known as Old Wolf Road) between Watervliet-Shaker Road and Albany-Shaker Road, Wolf Road between Albany-Shaker Road and Cerone Commercial Drive, and Albany-Shaker Road between Maxwell Road and Peter J Delasandro Boulevard. The project

study area includes approximately 16.5 km (10.3 miles) of roadway in the Town of Colonie, Albany County, New York. A site map and project location map are attached to this coordination plan.

In 2000, NYSDOT initiated the project scoping process to develop project needs and objectives, and evaluate project issues, elements and initiatives which would have an effect on project scope, cost and schedule. This process included traffic data collection, conceptual alternative development, and development of nearly 30 conceptual design alternatives.

A Project Advisory Committee (PAC), including local and State officials, was formed to provide input during the project development process. The first PAC meeting was held in August 2000 to familiarize the PAC with the project, review the design process, project objectives, and public involvement process.

In 2001, the number of conceptual alternatives was reduced down to three basic alternatives that represented generalized access concepts. The traffic operations of the three concepts were evaluated using CORSIM models to determine the relative operational benefits of each.

A second PAC meeting was held in August 2001 to update the committee on project progress, concepts developed, the traffic analysis results, and potential environmental impacts for the three conceptual alternatives. Subsequent project meetings and discussions with the design team and involved agencies resulted in the development of approximately 25 additional alternatives. A project website was also developed in 2001 and a Public Information Meeting was held on November 15, 2001 to gain feedback on the concepts developed.

A draft Expanded Project Proposal (EPP) was developed and submitted to NYSDOT, CDTC and FHWA in February 2002. Based on comments to the draft EPP, the project objectives were refined to include measures of effectiveness (MOE) that would allow all design alternatives to be consistently and objectively measured with respect to fulfilling the project objectives. The NYSDOT re-evaluated all of the concepts that had been previously developed to determine if any of the concepts should be retained for further evaluation with the revised project objectives and MOE's. Based on this re-evaluation, nineteen of the conceptual alternatives were retained for full evaluation using the revised project objectives and MOE's. A Conceptual Screening Document was developed to describe the features of nineteen alternatives and to summarize the screening of each alternative. This document was distributed to the PAC in October 2005 for review and recommendation on preferred concepts to evaluate further in preliminary design. Based on the PAC comments and a review of the screening document by NYSDOT Region 1, four feasible alternatives were selected for advancement to Preliminary Design.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the July 16, 2007 Federal Register to inform agencies and the public of the beginning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the proposed project. The NOI identified that the proposed project involves access improvements between I-87, Wolf Road, and the Albany International Airport; and addressing bridge structural deficiencies for BINs 1033141 and 1033142 carrying I-87 over Albany-Shaker Road.

NEPA Scoping meetings were held for the Cooperating and Participating Agencies and the public in October 2007. Comments on the Range of Alternatives under consideration and the project Purpose and Need were accepted through November 2007. A Coordination Plan was also developed and distributed to the Cooperating and Participating Agencies.

A draft NEPA Project Scoping Report (PSR) was developed and submitted to NYSDOT and FHWA in July 2008. Based on comments on the draft PSR, the purpose and need and range of alternatives were clarified, and justification for eliminating alternatives was refined to be more specific. The revised PSR was distributed to the Cooperating and Participating Agencies in January 2009, and a meeting with the agencies held to review the document was held on April 2, 2009. Specifically, the feasible alternatives to be evaluated during preliminary design, the decision making process, and coordination process were discussed at the meeting. As a result of comments received at this meeting, four build alternatives were selected for further evaluation: Upgrade Alternative, Diamond Alternative, Flyover Alternative, and Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) Alternative.

A draft Environmental Analysis Methodologies document was prepared and distributed for review and comment to the Cooperating and Participating Agencies in September 2009. Comments on the Environmental Analysis Methodologies were accepted through October 14, 2009 and the final document was distributed to the agencies in November 2009.

In 2011, Federal Highway Administration determined that the proposed project did not meet the requirements and could not be approved as construction of a new interchange (Exit 3). As a result of this determination, the remaining alternatives under consideration were modified to incorporate removal of the existing Exit 4 ramps to eliminate duplicate movements and the project named was updated to I-87 Exit 4 Access Improvements.

A meeting with the Cooperating and Participating Agencies was held on June 1, 2011 to review the preliminary investigation of engineering considerations and environmental impacts of the feasible alternatives. A summary package, including descriptions, figures, and travel time and delay information was distributed to each agency along with a revised Coordination Plan. At this time, the Upgrade Alternative and SPUI Alternative were dismissed from further consideration since they did not meet the project's Purpose and Need, leaving only the Diamond Alternative and Flyover Alternative. Comments on the preliminary investigation of engineering considerations and environmental impacts were accepted through June 21, 2011.

A public information meeting for the proposed noise barriers was held on August 22, 2013 and input solicited from the benefited receptors. Responses were received from 58% of the benefited receptors with 80% of the responses in favor of constructing the proposed noise barriers. Since a clear majority of the benefited receptors that responded are in favor of the recommended noise barrier, the barrier will be constructed during the second phase of the project's construction unless conditions change substantially during final design.

An evaluation of both alternatives and their impacts was completed and has been included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The estimated construction cost is \$74.44M for the

Diamond Alternative and \$47.51M for the Flyover Alternative. In addition, the Diamond Alternative requires almost twice the area of right-of-way acquisition as the Flyover Alternative and results in relocation of 2 additional commercial businesses, resulting in an additional \$10.00M in right-of-way costs for the Diamond Alternative. Further, the Diamond Alternative results in more than twice the amount of wetland impacts than the Flyover Alternative (4.36 acres compared to 1.96 acres, respectively). For these reasons, the Diamond Alternative was dismissed from further consideration as a feasible alternative and the Flyover Alternative was identified as the Preferred Alternative in October 2013.

### 1.3 Key Resource Concerns

The following potential environmental, social, and economic issues in the project area and surrounding community that may affect the project schedule have been identified:

- Wetlands - The NYSDEC wetland map for the Albany quadrangle identifies one state protected wetland within the project study area (wetland A-10). The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map for the same quadrangle indicates that the majority of federal wetlands identified fall within the boundaries of state wetland A-10, which is comprised of approximately 275 acres of Class 1 and Class 0 wetlands. Small pockets of federal wetlands also exist north of Albany-Shaker Road and along Wolf Road.
- Surface Waters – The NYSDEC GIS database identifies two mapped streams within the project study area, Shaker Creek and an unnamed tributary of Shaker Creek. These streams are located west of I-87 between Albany-Shaker Road and Sand Creek Road. Shaker Creek has a Class and Standard of “C” stream. The best usage for Class and Standard of “C” waters is fishing.
- Ecology - A large tract of deciduous forest occurs in the southwest portion of the project study area. The forest is continuous with the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve and represents a unique asset in an otherwise urban environment. Several intermittent streams traverse the forest, providing a water source for area wildlife. The forest is bordered to the north and northeast by open fields and agricultural areas. Areas such as this, where multiple habitat types meet, create what is known as the “edge effect” and represent high quality wildlife habitat. The forest tract provides an important refuge for area wildlife.
- Cultural Resources - The project area contains one precontact archaeological site identified during the Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey. The site examination study identified concentrations of Native American artifacts including partial projectile points, chert bifaces and fire-cracked rocks. This site represents a well-preserved archaeological site within the Albany Pine Bush and offers a unique opportunity to analyze precontact Native American use and interaction within the ecosystem and contribute to the limited



knowledge concerning precontact settlement and land use patterns in the Albany Pine Bush.

- Farmland - The project area contains farmland contained in the Albany County Agricultural District No. 3 which includes the Engel farm property on the north side of Albany-Shaker Road and the Hillard farm properties along Old Wolf Road and Wade Road. Agricultural District No. 3 previously included land on the south side of Albany-Shaker Road which is currently owned by the Albany County Airport Authority (formerly part of the Engel farm property). This portion of the former Engel farm property is no longer actively farmed, and the Albany County legislature removed it from the Agricultural District in August 2011. The project area also contains prime and unique soils that are protected under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

## Section 2. Lead/Cooperating/Participating Agencies

### 2.1 List of Agencies, Roles, and Responsibilities

SAFETEA-LU requires the identification of lead, participating, and cooperating agencies in the development of an EIS. For the Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3/4 – Access Improvements EIS, the lead agencies include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The New York Division of FHWA, in coordination with NYSDOT, will determine what other federal, state, and local agencies will serve as joint lead agencies, project sponsors, participating agencies, and cooperating agencies.

#### **What are the roles of lead agencies under SAFETEA-LU?**

The lead agencies must perform the functions that they have traditionally performed in preparing an EIS in accordance with 23 CFR part 771 and 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. In addition, the lead agencies now must identify and involve participating agencies; develop coordination plans; provide opportunities for public and participating agency involvement in defining the purpose and need and determining the range of alternatives; and collaborate with participating agencies in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives. In addition, lead agencies must provide increased oversight in managing the process and resolving issues.

#### **What is the difference between a participating agency and a cooperating agency?**

According to Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.5), "cooperating agency" means any Federal agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. A State or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects are on lands of tribal interest, a Native American tribe may, by agreement with the lead agencies, also become a cooperating agency.

Participating agencies are those with an interest in the project. The standard for participating agency status is more encompassing than the standard for cooperating agency status described above. Therefore, cooperating agencies are, by definition, participating agencies, but not all participating agencies are cooperating agencies. The lead agencies should consider the distinctions noted below in deciding whether to invite an agency to serve as a cooperating/participating agency or only as a participating agency.

The roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies are similar, but cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process. A distinguishing feature of a cooperating agency is that the CEQ regulations (40 CFR Section 1501.6) permit a cooperating agency to "assume on request of the

lead agency responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise." An additional distinction is that, pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.3, "a cooperating agency may adopt without re-circulating the environmental impact statement of a lead agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied." This provision is particularly important to permitting agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who, as cooperating agencies, routinely adopt USDOT environmental documents.

Table 1 lists all of the agencies involved in the environmental review process for the proposed project and their associated roles and responsibilities. This table will be completed upon receipt of agency acknowledgements of the agency coordination letters.

**Table 1 – Agency Roles**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Federal Highway Administration	Lead Agency	Manage environmental review process; prepare EIS and decision document; provide opportunity for public & participating/cooperating agency involvement, arbitrate and resolve issues.
NYS Department of Transportation	Joint Lead Agency	Manage environmental review process; prepare EIS and decision document; provide opportunity for public & participating/cooperating agency involvement, arbitrate and resolve issues.
US Army Corps of Engineers	Cooperating Agency/ Participating Agency	<p>Provide comments on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose and Need</li><li>• Range of Alternatives</li><li>• Methodologies</li><li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li><li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li><li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li><li>• Mitigation</li></ul> <p>Adopt EIS and coordinate public outreach when possible.</p> <p>Section 404 permit jurisdiction.</p>

**Table 1 – Agency Roles**

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
US Environmental Protection Agency	Cooperating Agency/ Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Cooperating Agency/ Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Cooperating Agency/ Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul> Section 401 water quality certification Article 24 permit Article 15 MOU SPDES permit jurisdiction.
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>

**Table 1 – Agency Roles**

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (SHPO)	Cooperating Agency/ Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul> Section 106 NHPA responsibilities
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul> Section 106 NHPA responsibilities
Mohican Nation	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul> Section 106 NHPA responsibilities
Delaware Tribe	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul> Section 106 NHPA responsibilities
Federal Aviation Administration	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>

**Table 1 – Agency Roles**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
US National Resource Conservation Service	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
Capital District Transportation Committee	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
Albany County Executive Office	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
Town of Colonie	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
Village of Colonie	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>

**Table 1 – Agency Roles**

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
City of Albany	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
Albany County Airport Authority	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
NYS Thruway Authority	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>
Capital District Transportation Authority	Participating Agency	Provide comments on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose and Need</li> <li>• Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Level of detail for analysis of alternatives</li> <li>• Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Mitigation</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Agency Contact Information

Table 2 lists all of the agencies involved in the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 process for the proposed project, point of contacts, contact's phone number, and contact's email address. Shaded cells designate the primary agency contact. This table will be completed upon receipt of agency acknowledgements of the agency coordination letters.

Table 2 - Agency Contact Information		
Name / Title	Address	Phone/Email
Federal Highway Administration, New York Division (Lead Agency)		
Mr. Omar Elkassed Area Engineer	Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building, Room 719 Clinton Street and North Pearl Street Albany, NY 12207	518.431.8882 <a href="mailto:omar.elkassed@dot.gov">omar.elkassed@dot.gov</a>
Ms. Melissa Toni Environmental Coordinator	Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building, Room 719 Clinton Street and North Pearl Street Albany, NY 12207	518.431.8867 <a href="mailto:melissa.toni@dot.gov">melissa.toni@dot.gov</a>
New York State Department of Transportation, Region One (Joint Lead Agency)		
Mr. John Masi Project Manager	50 Wolf Road, Pod 2-3 Albany, NY 12232	(518) 485-9636 <a href="mailto:john.masi@dot.ny.gov">john.masi@dot.ny.gov</a>
US Army Corps of Engineers (Cooperating / Participating Agency)		
Ms. Amy Gitchell Chief, Western Permits Section	US Army Corps of Engineers Upstate Regulatory Field Office Attn: CENAN-OP-RU, Bldg. 10, 3rd Floor North 1 Buffington Street, Watervliet Arsenal Watervliet, NY 12189-4000	
Ms. Christine Delorier Albany Field Office	US Army Corps of Engineers Upstate Regulatory Field Office Attn: CENAN-OP-RU, Bldg. 10, 3rd Floor North 1 Buffington Street, Watervliet Arsenal Watervliet, NY 12189-4000	(518) 266-6354 <a href="mailto:Christine.Delorier@usace.army.mil">Christine.Delorier@usace.army.mil</a>
US Environmental Protection Agency (Cooperating / Participating Agency)		
Ms. Grace Musumeci Chief, Environmental Review Section	290 Broadway New York, NY 10007-1866	(212) 637-3738 <a href="mailto:musumeci.grace@epa.gov">musumeci.grace@epa.gov</a>
Ms. Lingard Knutson	Strategic Planning & Multi Media Program Branch 290 Broadway Region 2 New York, NY 10007-1866	(212) 637-3747 <a href="mailto:knutson.lingard@epamail.epa.gov">knutson.lingard@epamail.epa.gov</a>
US Fish and Wildlife Service (Cooperating / Participating Agency)		
Ms. Sandra Doran	New York Field Office 3817 Luker Road Cortland, NY 13045	(607) 753-9334 <a href="mailto:sandra_doran@fws.gov">sandra_doran@fws.gov</a>



Table 2 - Agency Contact Information		
Name / Title	Address	Phone/Email
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Cooperating / Participating Agency)		
Ms. Nancy Baker Environmental Analyst	1130 North Wescott Road Schenectady, NY 12306	(518) 357-2045 <a href="mailto:nmbaker@gw.dec.state.ny.us">nmbaker@gw.dec.state.ny.us</a>
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Robert Somers Chief, Agricultural Protection Unit	10B Airline Drive Albany, NY 12235	(518) 457-7076 <a href="mailto:bob.somers@agmkt.state.ny.us">bob.somers@agmkt.state.ny.us</a>
Mr. Matt Brower	10B Airline Drive Albany, NY 12235	
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (Cooperating / Participating Agency)		
Ms. Ruth Pierpont Director	Peebles Island, PO Box 189 Waterford, NY 12188-0189	(518) 237-8643 x3269
Ms. Sloane Bullough Historic Preservation Specialist	Peebles Island, PO Box 189 Waterford, NY 12188-0189	(518) 237-8643 x3252
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Arnold L. Printup Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe 412 Route 37 Akwesasne, NY 13655	(518) 358-2272 <a href="mailto:arnold.printup@srmt-nsn.gov">arnold.printup@srmt-nsn.gov</a>
Chief Randy Hart	Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe 412 Route 37 Akwesasne, NY 13655	
Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians (Participating Agency)		
Ms. Sherry White Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians W13447 Camp 14 Road P.O. Box 70 Bowler, WI 54416	(715) 793-3970 <a href="mailto:Sherry.White@mohican-nsn.gov">Sherry.White@mohican-nsn.gov</a>
Delaware Tribe (Participating Agency)		
Dr. Brice Obermeyer	Delaware Tribe Historic Preservation Office 1200 Commercial Street Roosevelt Hall, Route 212 Emporia State University Emporia, KS 66801	(620) 341-6699 <a href="mailto:bobermeyer@delawaretribe.org">bobermeyer@delawaretribe.org</a>
Federal Aviation Administration (Participating Agency)		
Ms. Sukhbir Gill Environmental Specialist	New York Airports District Office 600 Old Country Road, Suite 446 Garden City, NY 11530	(516) 227-3815
Mr. Steven Urlass Manager	New York Airports District Office 600 Old Country Road, Suite 446 Garden City, NY 11530	(516) 227-3803

<b>Table 2 - Agency Contact Information</b>		
<b>Name / Title</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone/Email</b>
Mr. Ralph Gatto Airport Engineer	New York Airports District Office 600 Old Country Road, Suite 446 Garden City, NY 11530	(516) 227-3812
Mr. Ralph Thompson Manager	Airport Planning and Programming 800 Independence Avenue SW Washington, DC 20591	(202) 267-3263
National Resource Conservation Service (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Astor Boozer State Conservationist	USDA National Resource Conservation Service The Galleries of Syracuse 441 South Salina Street, Suite 354 Syracuse, NY 13202	(315) 477-6504
Ms. Marilyn Stephenson Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations – Albany	USDA National Resource Conservation Service 1 Clinton Square, Room 333 Albany, NY 12207	(518) 431-4110 <a href="mailto:marilyn.stephenson@ny.usda.gov">marilyn.stephenson@ny.usda.gov</a>
Capital District Transportation Committee (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Michael Franchini Staff Director	One Park Place Albany, NY 12205	(518) 458-2161 <a href="mailto:mfranchini@cdtcmpto.org">mfranchini@cdtcmpto.org</a>
Albany County Executive Office (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Daniel McCoy County Executive	112 State Street, Room 825 Albany, NY 12207	(518) 447-7040 <a href="mailto:County_Executive@albanycounty.com">County_Executive@albanycounty.com</a>
Mr. Mark Fitzsimmons Director	Albany County Department of Economic Development, Conservation, and Planning 112 State Street, Room 720 Albany, NY 12207	(518) 447-5670 <a href="mailto:economicdevelopment@albanycounty.com">economicdevelopment@albanycounty.com</a>
Mr. Darrell Duncan Commissioner	Albany County Department of Public Works 449 New Salem Road Voorheesville, NY 12186	(518) 765-2055 <a href="mailto:dpw@albanycounty.com">dpw@albanycounty.com</a>
Town of Colonie (Participating Agency)		
Ms. Paula Mahan Supervisor	Memorial Town Hall P.O. Box 508 Newtonville, NY 12128	(518) 783-2728 <a href="mailto:colonie@colonie.org">colonie@colonie.org</a>
Mr. John Cunningham Commissioner	Department of Public Works Public Operations Center 347 Old Niskayuna Road Latham, NY 12110	(518) 783-6292 <a href="mailto:infodpw@colonie.org">infodpw@colonie.org</a>
Village of Colonie (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Frank Leak Mayor	2 Thunder Run Colonie, NY 12205	(518) 869-7562
Mr. Ronald Laberge Village of Colonie Engineering Consultant	Laberge Group 4 Computer Drive West Albany, NY 12205	(518) 458-7112

Table 2 - Agency Contact Information		
Name / Title	Address	Phone/Email
City of Albany (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Nicholas D'Antonio Commissioner	City of Albany Department of General Services One Conners Boulevard Albany, NY 12204-2514	(518) 434-1144
Mr. Randy Milano City Engineer	City of Albany Department of General Services One Conners Boulevard Albany, NY 12204-2514	(518) 434-5671
Albany County Airport Authority (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Stephen Iachetta Airport Planner	ARFF Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Albany, NY 12211	(518) 242-2238 <a href="mailto:iachetta@albanyairport.com">iachetta@albanyairport.com</a>
New York State Thruway Authority (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Richard Harris Director, Transportation Planning Bureau	Office of Transportation Planning and Environmental Services 200 Southern Boulevard PO Box 189 Albany, NY 12209	(518) 471-5090 <a href="mailto:richard.harris@thruway.ny.gov">richard.harris@thruway.ny.gov</a>
Capital District Transportation Authority (Participating Agency)		
Mr. Ross Farrell Director of Strategic Planning	110 Watervliet Avenue Albany, NY 12206	(518) 437-6866 <a href="mailto:rossf@cdta.org">rossf@cdta.org</a>

## Section 3. Coordination Points, Responsibilities and Project Schedule

### 3.1 Coordination Points, Information Requirements and Responsibilities

SAFETEA-LU establishes milestones within the environmental review process for involvement and review opportunities. Table 3 summarizes the key coordination points between the lead agencies, participating agencies, and public, including which agency is responsible for activities during that coordination point. Table 3 also specifies the information required at each coordination point and who is responsible for transmitting that information. Estimated dates are included for informational and resource planning purposes. Time frames for all review periods are established in accordance with SAFETEA-LU unless covered under existing agreements (i.e. review periods established in the NYSDOT/FHWA/SHPO Section 106 Agreement).

### 3.2 Project Schedule

Table 3 provides a general project schedule for the project. In general, participating agencies will have 30 days after transmittal of information from the NYSDOT and FHWA in which to respond and provide comments to information distributed. The project schedule shows an anticipated EIS completion with issuance of a Record of Decision by FHWA by Spring 2014.

Table 3 – Coordination Points						
Coordination Point	Task	Anticipated Date of Information "In"	Agency Responsible	Task	Anticipated Date of Information "Out"	Agency Responsible
NYSDOT DESIGN Phase I – Preliminary Design	Notice of Initiation	June 2007 *	NYSDOT	FHWA acknowledges receipt of Notice of Project Initiation via letter.	June 2007	FHWA
	Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	June 2007 *	FHWA	Publish Notice in Federal Register	July 2007 (30 days after transmittal)	EPA
	Publish notice in newspaper	July 2007 *	NYSDOT	None		
	Send agencies a copy of the NOI; invite agencies and public to scoping meeting	August 2007 *	NYSDOT	Accept participating or cooperating agency status	September 2007 (30 days after transmittal)	Cooperating & Participating Agencies
	Send agencies a copy of the draft Coordination Plan	August 2007 *	NYSDOT	Review Coordination Plan, provide contact information and how agency intends to participate in project	September 2007 (30 days after transmittal)	Cooperating & Participating Agencies
	Hold Scoping Meeting for Agencies and public (most likely separate meetings)	October 2007 *	FHWA NYSDOT	Respond with availability, provide feedback before or during meeting, provide information relevant to expertise or jurisdiction	October 2007	Cooperating & Participating Agencies, public
	Provide agencies and public with draft purpose and need statement via letters; solicit comments	October 2007 *	FHWA NYSDOT	Comment on Purpose and Need	November 2007 (30 days after transmittal)	Cooperating & Participating Agencies, public

**Table 3 – Coordination Points**

Coordination Point		Task	Anticipated Date of Information "In"	Agency Responsible	Task	Anticipated Date of Information "Out"	Agency Responsible
Design Phase I (continued)	Range of Alternatives	Provide participating agencies and public with information regarding alternatives being considered via letters; solicit comments	October 2007 *	FHWA NYSDOT	Comment on Range of Preliminary Design Alternatives to be studied in the EIS	November 2007 (30 days after transmittal)	Cooperating & Participating Agencies, public
	NYSDOT Scope Closure	Obtain NYSDOT Regional Director's Approval of Scope Closure	January 2008 *	NYSDOT	Concurrence	February 2009 (30 days after transmittal)	FHWA
	Collaboration on impact assessment methodologies	Provide participating agencies with proposed methodology to assess alternatives' impacts.	September 2009 *	FHWA NYSDOT	Comment on methodologies	October 2009 (30 days after transmittal)	Cooperating & Participating Agencies
	Identify Preferred Alternative	Provide participating agencies with preferred alternative selection	November 2014	NYSDOT Project Sponsor	None		
Design Phase II	Circulation of DEIS	Provide participating and cooperating agencies with DEIS and make DEIS available to the public; solicit comments.	January 2014	FHWA NYSDOT	Identification of issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permit/approval.	February 2014 (30 days after transmittal)	Cooperating Agencies with Jurisdiction
					Identification of issues that may need clarification or additional analysis.	February 2014 (30 days after transmittal)	Participating Agencies
					Comments on alternatives' potential impacts.	February 2014 (30 days after transmittal)	Public
Design Phase III	Public Hearing	Hold design public hearing; solicit comments.	February 2014	FHWA NYSDOT	Comments on alternatives' potential impacts.	Spring 2014 (45 days after transmittal)	Cooperating & Participating Agencies, public

**Table 3 – Coordination Points**

Coordination Point		Task	Anticipated Date of Information "In"	Agency Responsible	Task	Anticipated Date of Information "Out"	Agency Responsible
Design Phase IV	Higher Level of Detail	Project Sponsor may request to conduct a higher level of detail on the preferred alternative	Spring 2014	NYSDOT Project Sponsor	Approve a higher level of detail	Spring 2014	FHWA
	Circulation of FEIS	Provide participating agencies with FEIS and make FEIS available to the public	Spring 2014	FHWA NYSDOT	None		
	Issue Record Of Decision	Public Record of Decision	Spring 2014	FHWA NYSDOT	None		
	Issue Nationwide Permit No. 3	Submit permit application for approval	Winter 2013/2014	NYSDOT	Issue permit	Spring 2014 (90 days after transmittal)	ACOE
Phase I Construction	Issue Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Submit certification application for approval	Winter 2013/2014	NYSDOT	Issue certification	Spring 2014 (90 days after transmittal)	NYSDEC
	Coordinate with NYSDEC per Article 15 Memorandum of Understanding	Coordinate with NYSDEC	Winter 2013/2014	NYSDOT	None		
	Issue SPDES permit	Submit SWPPP for approval	Winter 2013/2014	NYSDOT	Approval of SWPPP	Spring 2014 (60 days after transmittal)	NYSDEC

\* Indicates actual completion date for tasks that have been completed.

## Section 4. Revision History

Identify changes to the Coordination Plan. Note: If a schedule was included in the original coordination plan and it is the item that requires modification, concurrence on the schedule change is required only if the schedule is being shortened and then only from cooperating agencies, not all participating agencies.

**Table 4**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	10/11/07	A. Trichilo	Update agency contacts and schedule.
2	04/01/08	A. Trichilo	Update agency contacts and schedule.
3	01/13/08	A. Trichilo	Update project schedule.
4	11/20/09	A. Trichilo	Update agency contacts and schedule.
5	02/15/11	A. Trichilo	Update agency contacts and schedule.
6	12/05/13	J. Masi	Update project history, agency contacts and schedule.



## Section 5. Other Information (Use only as needed)

### **Revision No. 6 (12/05/2013)**

Included in this revision are updates to the project history, the addition of Cultural Resources (Section 106) as a Key Resource Concern, updates to the agency contacts, and revisions to the project schedule.

The project history has been revised to include a summary of the August 2013 public information meeting for the proposed noise barrier and dismissal of the Diamond Alternative from further consideration as a feasible alternative.

Notable schedule changes include:

- Removal of the pre-DEIS circulation of the Socioeconomic and Environmental Impacts to the Cooperating & Participating Agencies,
- Removal of circulation of an Administrative DEIS to the Cooperating & Participating Agencies,
- Removal of Higher Level of Detail coordination point between NYSDOT and FHWA, and
- Removal of circulation of an Administrative FEIS to the Cooperating & Participating Agencies.

These coordination points have been removed from the project schedule for the following reasons:

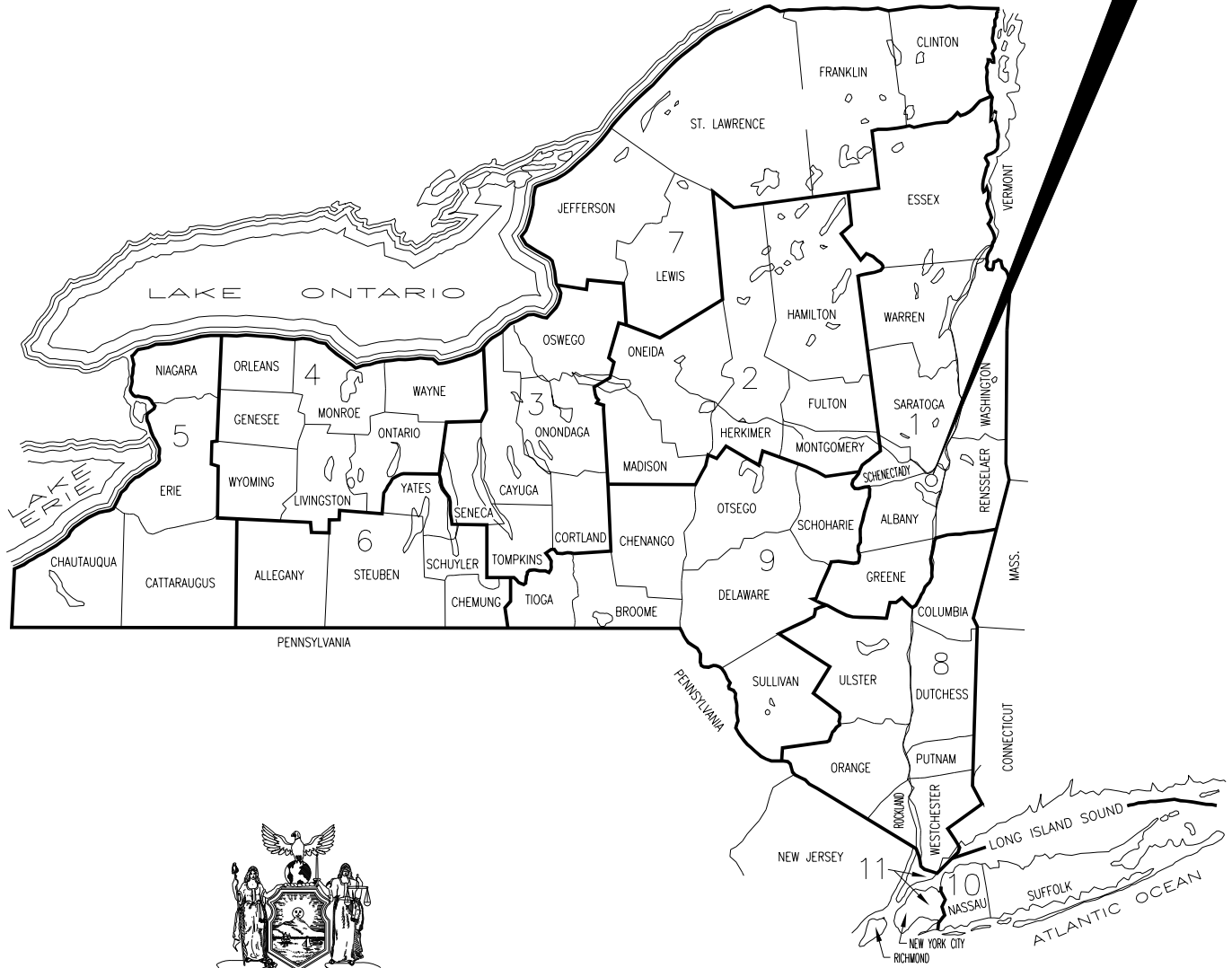
- Only two alternatives will be presented in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the Diamond Alternative and Flyover Alternative. The original schedule was developed assuming four alternatives would be included.
- The environmental effects are similar between the two alternatives.

Elimination of these coordination points will also help to keep the project on track for issuance of the Record of Decision in Spring 2014 and begin construction of Phase I work (replacement of the I-87 bridges over Albany-Shaker Road) in the Summer of 2014.



PROJECT SITE

7



MAP OF THE  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
SHOWING  
INDIVIDUAL NYSDOT REGIONS



CLOUGH HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP  
111 Winners Circle, PO Box 5269 - Albany, NY 12205-0269  
Main: (518) 453-4500 • www.coughharbour.com

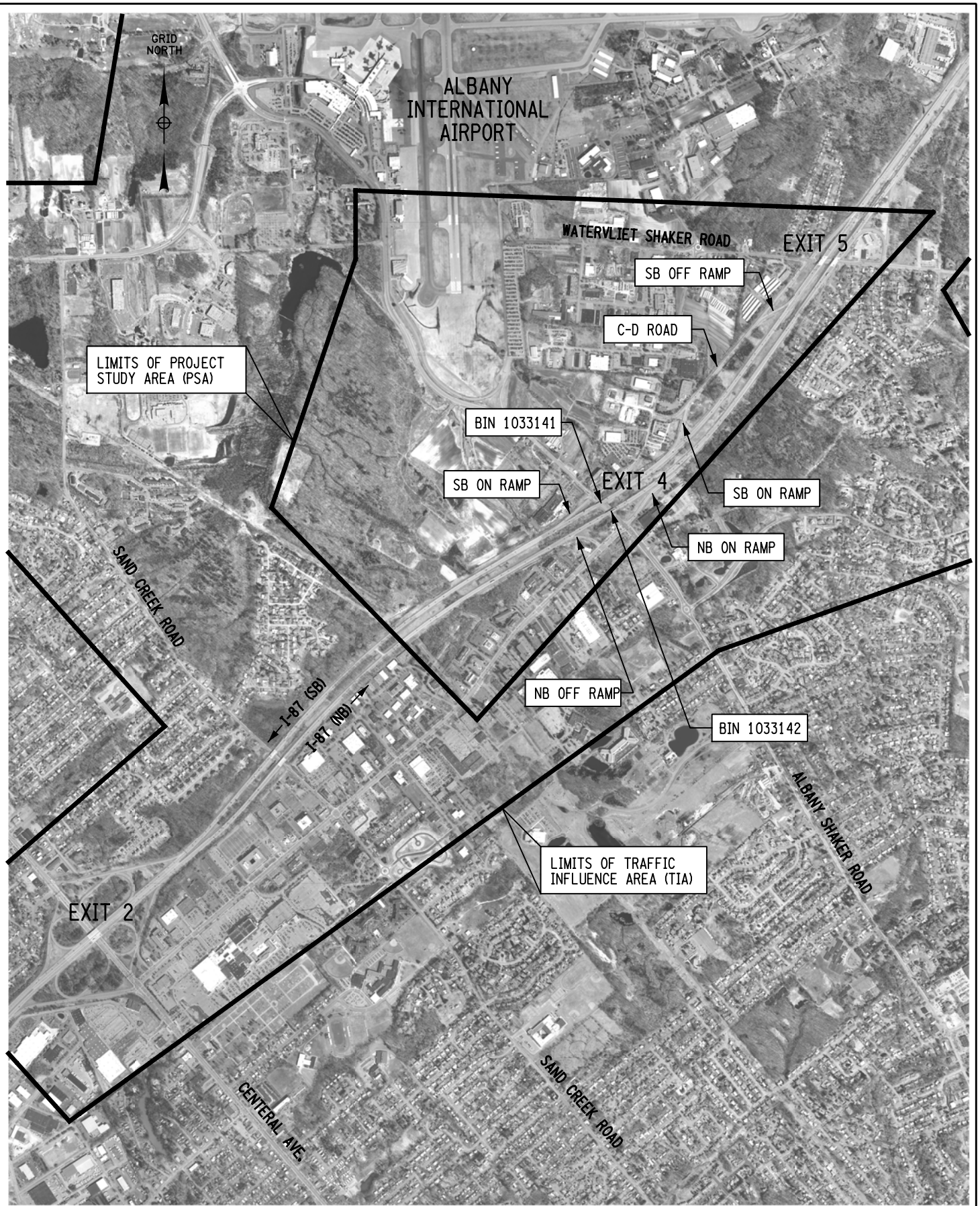
PROJECT SITE MAP

INTERSTATE 87 (I-87) EXIT 4, ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS  
TOWN OF COLONIE, ALBANY COUNTY, NEW YORK  
P.I.N. 1721.51

NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 1

FILE NAME = U:\9466\dsgr\Preliminary Design\Figures\172151.ets\_locationmap.dgn  
DATE/TIME = 12/2/2013  
USER = 2210



111 Winners Circle, PO Box 5269 • Albany, NY 12205-0269  
Main: (518) 453-4500 • www.chacompanies.com

## PROJECT LOCATION MAP

INTERSTATE 87 (I-87) EXIT 4, AIRPORT CONNECTOR  
TOWN OF COLONIE, ALBANY COUNTY, NEW YORK  
P.I.N. 1721.51.121

FIGURE

2

DATE: 8/13





STATE OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - REGION ONE  
50 WOLF ROAD  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12232  
[www.nysdot.gov](http://www.nysdot.gov)

SAM ZHOU, P.E.  
ACTING REGIONAL DIRECTOR

JOAN McDONALD  
COMMISSIONER

June 3, 2013

Ms. Sukhbir Gill, Environmental Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration  
New York Airports District Office  
600 Old Country Road, Suite 446  
Garden City, NY 11530

**Re: P.I.N. 1721.51: Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3/4 Access Improvements Project**

Dear Ms. Gill:

In response to your concern on project impacts to the Albany International Airport Runway Protection Zone (RPZ), we have re-evaluated the two feasible alternatives to minimize and/or avoid impacts to the RPZ. As outlined in the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) letter of June 3, 2011, the Diamond Alternative and Flyover Alternative have been selected for further consideration in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. During the evaluation of these alternatives, the Albany County Airport Authority requested that the proposed connector road / flyover ramps and vehicles queues at the proposed connector road / flyover ramp intersection with Albany-Shaker Road avoid encroachment into the RPZ.

As such, the proposed intersections of the connector road (Diamond Alternative) and flyover ramps (Flyover Alternative) with Albany-Shaker Road have been shifted approximately 300 feet to the east. We have enclosed two figures showing the revised location of the Diamond and Flyover Alternatives relative to the RPZ, the maximum queue lengths along Albany-Shaker Road, and the distance between the stop bar and the boundary of the RPZ along Albany-Shaker Road. As shown in the figures, there is no encroachment of the proposed roadways in the RPZ.

Traffic analyses were also completed using SYNCHRO to predict the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile queue lengths on the eastbound approach on Albany-Shaker Road to the proposed intersections. Below is a table summarizing the queue lengths for the design year of 2036 (ETC+20). They are reported in feet for the eastbound approach of Albany-Shaker Road at the intersection just east of the RPZ. Note that none of the design year queues will extend into the RPZ.

**Table 1 - Summary of Design Year Queues**

Movement	95 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Queue	
	Diamond	Flyover
Distance to RPZ	630	575
AM Peak Hour		
Eastbound Thru	253	274
Eastbound Right	6	54
PM Peak Hour		
Eastbound Thru	391	464
Eastbound Right	132	127

A force-off detector will be installed for eastbound Albany-Shaker Road traffic as a precaution to prevent unanticipated queue lengths from extending into the RPZ. This detector will allow for an extended green phase to clear traffic prior to encroachment into the RPZ.

The favor of a reply by email to me at [john.masi@dot.ny.gov](mailto:john.masi@dot.ny.gov) to indicate your receipt of this letter and the attached materials is requested. I look forward to receiving your comments. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail any of the enclosed materials, please contact me at (518) 485-9636.

Sincerely yours,

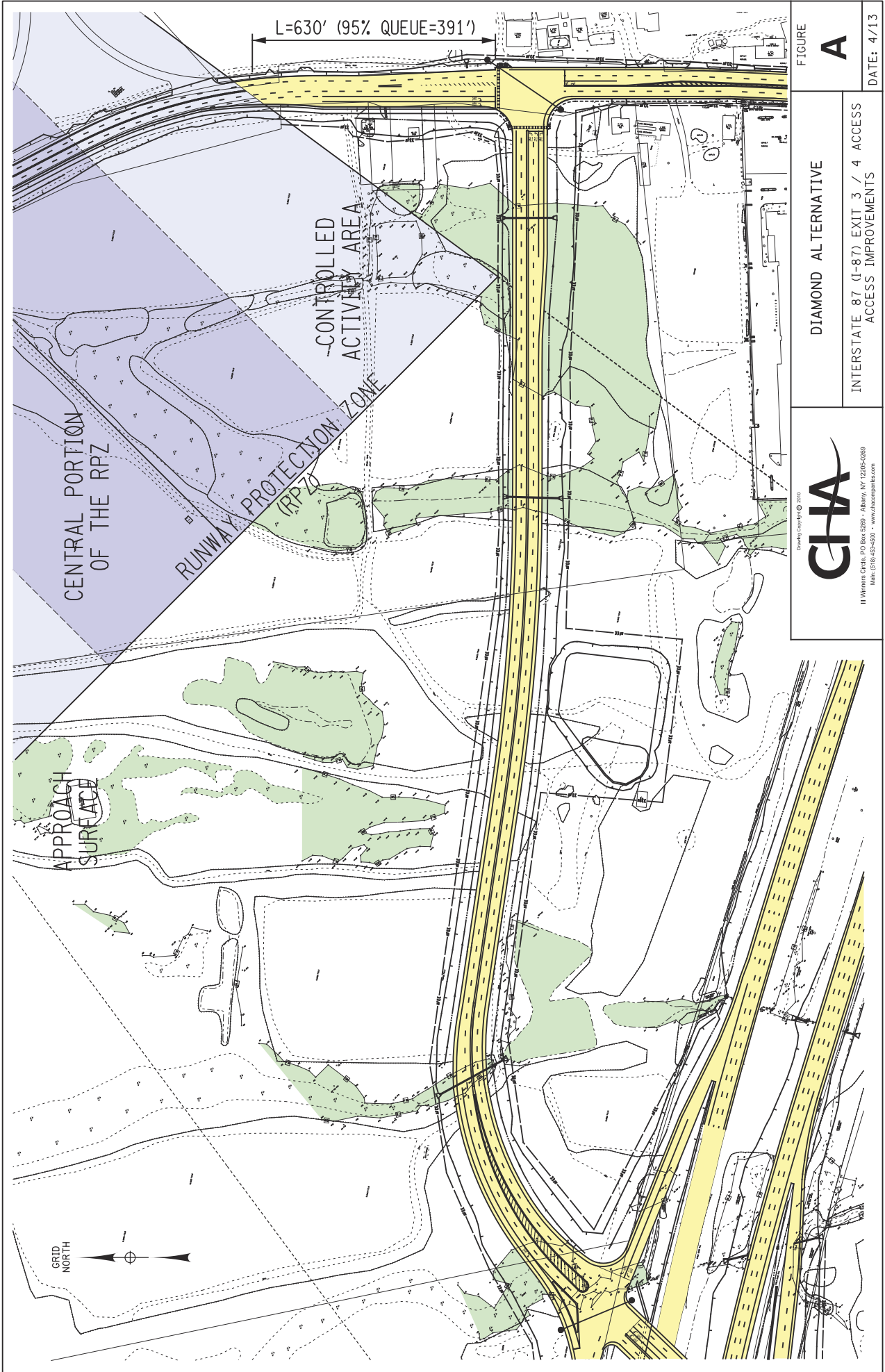


John Masi, P.E.  
Project Manager  
NYS Department of Transportation  
Region One Design

LMW/mjp  
Enclosures

cc: S. Urlass, Manager, FAA NY Airports District Office  
R. Gatto, Airport Engineer, FAA NY Airports District Office  
R. Thompson, APP-400: Manager, FAA Airport Planning & Programming  
D. Rinsler, APP-401: Assist. Manager, FAA Airport & Environmental Planning and Policy Development  
J. O'Donnell, Chief Executive Officer, Albany County Airport Authority  
S. Iachetta, Airport Planner, Albany County Airport Authority  
O. Elkassed, FHWA Area Engineer, NYS Division  
T. Kligerman, MO Design Quality Assurance Bureau, Project Development Section  
G. Mendoza, MO Acting Director Aviation Bureau  
L. Ecker, Project Manager, CHA Consulting, Inc.  
A. Trichilo, Region 1, Highway Design Supervisor  
file





CH2M

III Wilmetts Circle, PO Box 5289 • Albany, NY 12205-0289  
 Phone: (518) 455-4500 • www.ch2m.com

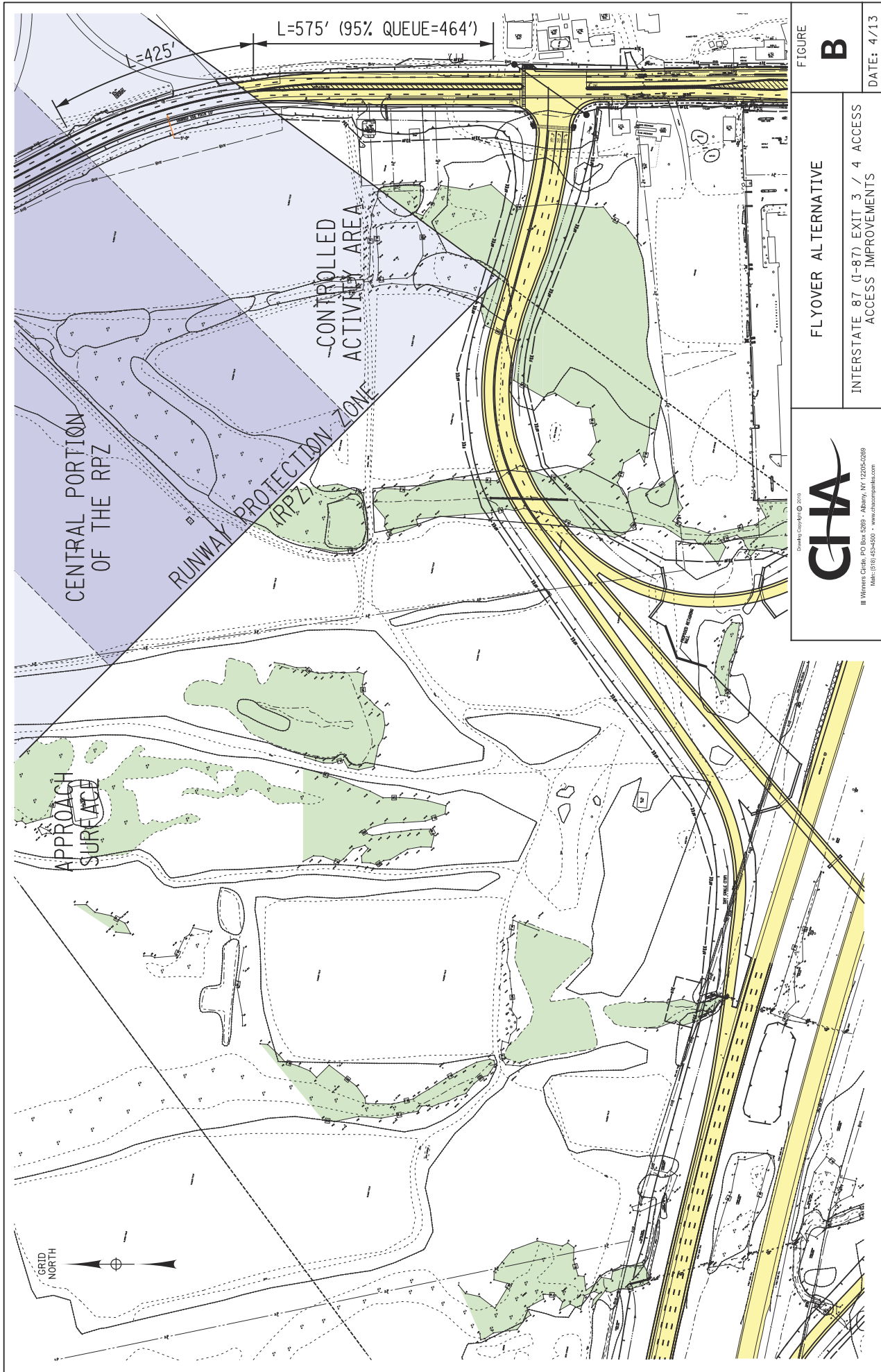
DIAMOND ALTERNATIVE

INTERSTATE 87 (I-87) EXIT 3 / 4 ACCESS  
 ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

FIGURE

**A**

DATE: 4/13



  
 111 Wilmers Circle, PO Box 5289 • Albany, NY 12205-0289  
 Mobile: (518) 455-4500 • www.ch2mhill.com

FLYOVER ALTERNATIVE  
 INTERSTATE 87 (I-87) EXIT 3 / 4 ACCESS  
 ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

FIGURE  
**B**  
 DATE: 4/13



**From:** [Sukhbir Gill](#)  
**Sent:** Friday, October 11, 2013 11:44 AM  
**To:** Masi, John (DOT)  
**Cc:** [steve.urlass](#) ; [Ralph.Gatto](#)  
**Subject:** P.I.N. 1721.51: Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3/4 Access Improvements Project

John,

I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter dated June 3, 2013. Upon review of your letter and the attached alternatives by this office, and the Airport Planning & Programming office in Washington D.C., we have determined we have no comments. The changes to the alternatives satisfies the infringement into the RPZ, and the force-off detector will be an effective addition to control the queue lengths.

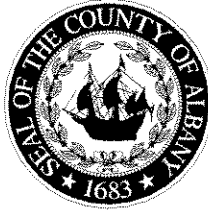
Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at the number below.

Kind regards,

Suki Gill

Environmental Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration  
New York Airports District Office  
600 Old Country Road, Suite 446  
Garden City, New York 11530





MICHAEL G. BRESLIN  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

COUNTY OF ALBANY  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
112 STATE STREET, ROOM 200  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207-2021  
(518) 447-7040 - FAX (518) 447-5589  
www.albanycounty.com

MICHAEL PERRIN  
DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 23, 2008

Angelo M. Trichilo, P.E.  
Highway Design Supervisor  
NYS Department of Transportation Region 1  
328 State Street  
Schenectady, New York 12305-2302

Re: Interstate 87 Exit 3, Airport Connector

Dear Mr. Trichilo:

We strongly disagree with your dismissal of the Exit 3 Interchange Alternative in your April 15, 2008 letter to County Executive Michael Breslin, and request that this alternative be progressed further during preliminary engineering for the following reasons:

1. All three local public entities involved in this project (the Town of Colonie, the Albany County Airport Authority, and the County of Albany) have expressed their preference for this alternative. Despite this, you have dismissed this alternative for other alternatives which do not meet the original project objectives, have significantly more negative impacts, or are more expensive.
2. The Exit 3 Interchange Alternative is the best alternative because it:
  - Provides the most simple, direct access to the Airport. Up until your October 2007 public meeting, the NYS DOT referred to this project as the "Airport Connector" project.
  - Meets more of the original project objectives than any other alternative. See the August 2000 advisory committee documents.
  - Is the only alternative to survive the entire process since its beginning in 2000.
  - Has a moderate cost when compared to the other alternatives. It costs significantly less than one of the Exit 4 Upgrade Alternatives that you are progressing.
  - Has minimal impacts on wetlands, commercial properties, and agricultural lands. We and the Airport own lands which could be used to mitigate wetlands impacts, the Hess Station was warned by the Town about the Exit 3 project impact, and the agricultural district can be avoided.
  - Requires mostly public land for the new right-of-way. The County and the Airport own most of the land needed for the new alignment.
  - Can completely avoid wetland impacts if moved south and west.

- Was supported by the most participants in the October 2007 public meeting, including Mr. Engel and many users of Ann Lee Pond.
3. The alternatives that you are progressing have significant flaws.
    - The Exit 4 Upgrade Alternative does not improve Airport access, and does not provide a gateway. As proposed, it actually increases the distance I-87 northbound traffic will need to travel on Wolf Road in order to drive to the Airport.
    - The Exit 4 Replacement Alternative is one of the most costly alternatives ever considered. It “dead ends” Old Wolf Road, which significantly increases the response time for the Town of Colonie police, and has a huge impact on businesses in the area.
    - The Partial Interchange Alternative addresses the least number of project alternatives. As proposed, it dissects the agricultural district, which was strongly opposed by the Town of Colonie and Mr. Engel.
  4. The project scope appears to have evolved or changed recently. For more than 7 years the NYS DOT referred to this project as the “Airport Connector” and in October 2007 the project name was changed to “Access Improvements.” In addition, the most viable option that the NYS DOT wants to progress (Exit 4 Upgrade Alternative) is basically a bridge replacement project. We believe that any change in the project scope or project objectives should be reviewed by both the Project Advisory Committee and the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC).
  5. The CDTC has supported this project for many years by funding and programming it through many updates of its Transportation Improvement Program. We cannot speak for all its members, but we believe that this project was always intended to be a new I-87 exit or at least a major improvement to the Airport access. Again, if this is not the case, the members of the CDTC should be informed and provided with some explanation.

We understand very well the need to replace aging infrastructure (e.g. 50 year old bridges) and the funding shortages faced by the NYS DOT and others. However, the NYS DOT is still able to complete large projects of regional significance throughout the state, such as the \$55 million Stewart Airport Connector Road, the \$36 million Batchellerville Bridge, and the \$600 million I-86 construction. The I-87 Exit 3 Airport Connector is also a project of regional significance which needs to be progressed.

Albany County will continue to work with the other municipalities and other project supporters in this area to accomplish this goal. Thank you for this opportunity for input. If you have any comments or questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Michael V. Franchini  
Commissioner

cc: Michael G. Breslin, County Executive  
Paula A. Mahan, Town of Colonie Supervisor  
John A. O'Donnell, P.E., Albany International Airport  
John P. Poorman, CDTC Staff Director



# TOWN OF COLONIE

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Public Operations Center  
347 Old Niskayuna Road  
Latham, New York 12110

Telephone: (518) 783-6292

Fax: (518) 785-3529

Website: [www.colonie.org/dpw](http://www.colonie.org/dpw)

Paula A. Mahan  
Town Supervisor

Robert S. Mitchell, P.E.  
Commissioner

Angelo M. Trichilo, P.E.  
Project Manager  
NYS Dept. of Transportation  
328 State Street  
Schenectady NY 12305

May 23, 2008

Re: **PIN 1721.51.121**  
**I-87 – Exit 3 Airport Connector**  
**Town of Colonie, Albany County**

Dear Mr. Trichilo:

The Town of Colonie has reviewed the NYSDOT "Range of Alternatives" dated May 1, 2008 for the above referenced project and first want to say that we are disappointed that the Exit 3 Alternative recommended by the Town of Colonie has been dismissed by NYSDOT and request that the Exit 3 Alternative be placed back on the alternative list for consideration.

In the November 14, 2007 letter to NYSDOT, the Town of Colonie clearly stated its recommendation for the Exit 3 Alternative and offered additional comments regarding this alternative. We understand that there are wetland impacts associated with this alternative, however, we suggested that this alternative be "tightened up" to limit the impact on the wetland area and hoped that NYSDOT would get creative in the design to lessen the impact on the wetland area.

If NYSDOT is looking to limit the alternatives to be advanced, the Town of Colonie recommends that the Partial Interchange, Partial New Exit 3 be dismissed. The following is the Town of Colonie's comments regarding each alternative:

**Exit 3 Alternative** –(at Metro Park Drive)

- Meets the most of the original project objectives
- Best direct access to the Airport and Metro Park Drive. The Town of Colonie has planned its Wolf Road Service Road system with this alternative in mind. Also, the Town of Colonie Planning Board has structured the Planning Board approvals of projects in the subject area to account for this alternative which is only alternative that has survived the process since the beginning of this project. Metro Park Drive is the most appropriate access point from the Wolf Road area.
- This alternative has a moderate cost compared to other alternatives.

Angelo M. Trichilo, P.E.

May 23, 2008

Page 2

- The Town of Colonie owns property for the access to Wolf Road opposite Metro Park Drive and most of the overall property needed for this alternative is public property.
- This alternative can be "tweaked" to avoid the wetland areas and to avoid any impacts on businesses. The Hess Station on Wolf Road is aware of the future Exit 3 access through their site within their Town of Colonie Planning Board approval as is the Red Roof Inn.
- This alternative is also supported by the County of Albany, the Airport Authority and other area users.
- Provides Gateway effect to the Airport.

#### **Exit 4 Upgrade Alternative**

- This alternative has the lowest cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Although this alternative has minimal impact on wetlands and agricultural lands, it does not improve access to the Airport.
- We disagree with access at Marcus Boulevard. This does not fit well with the Town's Wolf Road Service road efforts previously stated. The most appropriate access point to I-87 from the Wolf Road area is opposite Metro Park Drive.
- This appears to be a bridge replacement project. Can the bridge replacement at Exit 4 be combined with the Exit 3 Alternative as we have previously suggested in our November 2007 letter?
- Does not provide Gateway effect to the Airport

#### **Exit 4 Replacement – Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)**

- The Town of Colonie is opposed to the Old Wolf Road cul-de-sac.
- This alternative has a major impact on businesses in the subject area which is a concern to the Town of Colonie.
- This alternative improves access but does not provide a Gateway effect to the airport.
- This alternative is the most expensive compared to other alternatives.
- The SPUI layout is confusing.

#### **Partial Interchange**

- This alternative has a moderate cost compared to the other alternatives.
- Does not provide a Gateway effect to the airport.
- The impact to the Engel's farm is a concern to the Town of Colonie as previously stated in our November 2007 letter.
- Does not support the Town of Colonie's Wolf Road Service Road efforts.

Angelo M. Trichilo, P.E.  
May 23, 2008  
Page 3

- The Town of Colonie recommends that this alternative be eliminated and that the Exit 3 Alternative be advanced.

**New Exit 4**

- This alternative is not supported by the Town of Colonie.

The Town of Colonie again thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this project. We trust that our comments and concerns will be addressed by NYSDOT. We reiterate our request to have the Exit 3 Alternative placed back on the alternatives list for consideration. Town of Colonie representatives remain available to meet with the NYSDOT staff at your convenience.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert S. Mitchell". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "R" and "M".

Robert S. Mitchell, P.E.

RSM:jh

CC: P. Mahan, Town Supervisor  
M. Magguilli, Town Attorney  
J. Lacivita, Town Director of Planning & Economic Development  
M. Franchini, Albany County DPW  
S. Iachetta, Airport Authority







**ALBANY COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

ALBANY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
SUITE 200  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12211-1057

**TEL:** 518.242.2222  
**ADMIN FAX:** 518.242.2641  
**FINANCE FAX:** 518.242.2640  
**SITE:** [www.albanyairport.com](http://www.albanyairport.com)

May 23, 2008

The Honorable Astrid C. Glynn  
Commissioner  
NYS Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, New York 12205

Re: P.I.N. 721.51: Purpose & Need and Range Alternatives for the  
Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3/4 Access Improvements Project

Dear Commissioner Glynn:

I would like to begin by thanking you and your agency for designing excellent road improvements which serve the Albany International Airport and adjoining businesses located within the Airport area. The improvements to Albany-Shaker Road, Watervliet Shaker Road and replacement bridges at Exit 5 improve access and bring a higher level of service to the Airport, which did not exist five years ago. The transformation of the Airport to a modern facility would not have happened without the support of the NYS Department of Transportation.

The community within the Capital Region and beyond has always had a strong voice in the planning and development of the Airport. Within the last few weeks we have heard from many civic and business leaders about the future plans of Exit 3 (I87). This voice is strongly in favor of building a new Exit 3 and is opposed to improvements and/or an upgrade of existing Exit 4 as a way to improve access. I have attached letters from the following groups in support of the new Exit 3 Alternative:

- Mr. Peter Aust, President, Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Bernard Connors, Chairman, British American
- Ms. Linda Hillman, President, Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Ray Melleady, Executive Director, CDTA
- Mr. Tom Nolte, Executive Director, Colonie Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Steve Sisneros, Manager Properties, Southwest Airlines Co.
- Ms. Lyn Taylor, President, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. F. Michael Tucker, President, Center for Economic Growth

---

DAVID E. LANGDON, CHAIR

RICHARD J. SHERWOOD, VICE CHAIR

HENRY E. DENNIS, JR.

DANIEL M. SLEASMAN

JOHN A. GRAZIANO, JR.

ELLIOTT A. SHAW

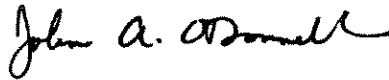
DORSEY M. WHITEHEAD

JOHN A. O'DONNELL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I can state with confidence that the Albany County Airport Authority Board and staff are in support of a new Exit 3 based upon the merits of the Alternative. We are requesting your consideration of including the new Exit 3 Alternative (Alternative A-1) as the preferred alternative and not limit the project to an upgrading of existing Exit 4.

If I can be of any further assistance or if you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. O'Donnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

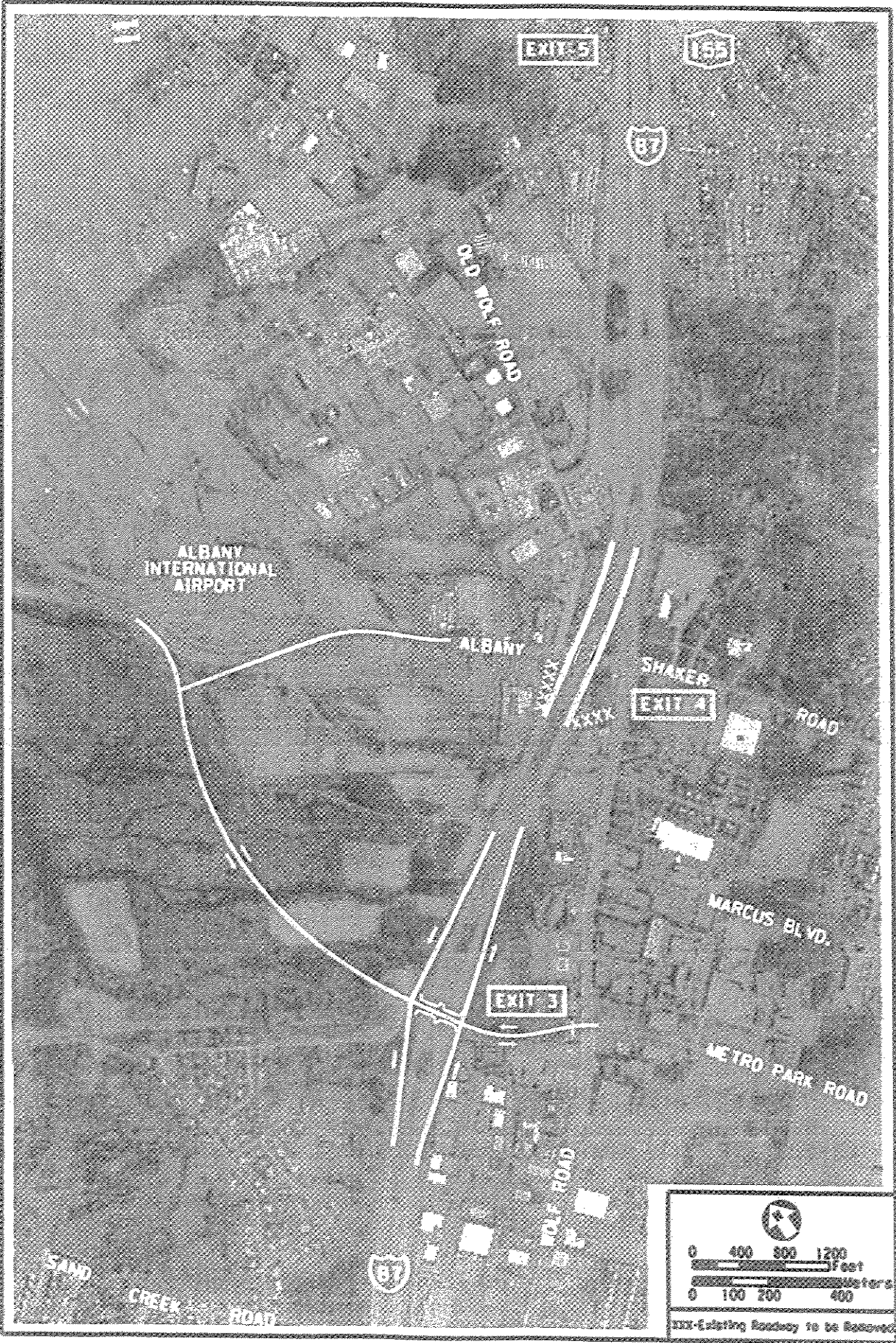
John A. O'Donnell  
Chief Executive Officer

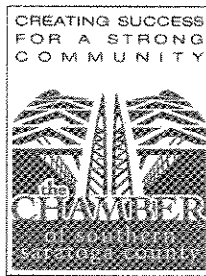
JAO:go

Attachments

cc: Hon. Michael G. Breslin, Albany County Executive  
Hon. Paula Mahan, Colonie Town Supervisor  
Mr. Angelo Trichilo, Project Manager, NYSDOT

ALTERNATIVE A-1





May 21, 2008

Ms. Astrid C. Glynn, Commissioner  
New York State Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12205

Re: Interstate-87 Exit 3

Dear Commissioner Glynn,

On behalf of The Chamber of Southern Saratoga County, I am writing to voice strong support for the creation of a direct access route to the Albany International Airport through the construction of an "Exit 3" interchange on Interstate 87.

As our region continues to grow and realize the vision of becoming the leading technology region of the Northeast, convenient access/egress from the region's airport is vital to continue sustained economic development. The Albany International Airport has continually increased both commercial and freight traffic for over a decade and anticipates significant growth in the next decade. The lack of a direct access route from I-87 has a direct impact on the ability to attract economic development in the region. The Chamber feels strongly that now is the time to move forward on the creation of an Exit 3 that has been proposed for many years. An Exit 3 project is vitally important to the Airport since over one million patrons now arrive annually from the south through the congested intersections at Exit 4, Wolf Road and Albany-Shaker Road. In addition, it is anticipated that with the ongoing development of technologies companies in Saratoga County and beyond, additional passenger and freight traffic will increase from I-87 northbound creating added burdens to the Wolf Road/Albany-Shaker Road intersections. Eliminating this congestion through the creation of Exit 3 is essential if the Airport is to attract new airlines, airport related businesses and new air-freight customers.

On a recent visit to a similar technology region of the country that hosts semi-conductor manufacturing and related industries, we spoke to regional planners and business leaders who overwhelmingly indicated that having an airport with ease of access to and from a major highway is vital to their economic prosperity and growth. According to Dr. John Kasarda, Director of the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at the University of North Carolina, airports will drive 21<sup>st</sup> Century business location, job creation and urban development as much as highways in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, railroads in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and seaports in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. He notes that airports today are much more than aviation infrastructures. They have become multi-modal, multifunctional enterprises generating considerable commercial development within and well beyond their boundaries.

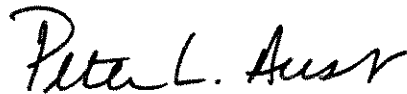
PO Box 399 – 15 Park Avenue - Suite 7  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
518.371.7748 fax 518.371.5025

Spines and clusters of airport-linked businesses are forming along airport transportation corridors up to 20 miles from some airports with significant economic impact measured up to 60 miles. This development includes: business and technology parks; logistics parks and distribution centers; industrial estates and light manufacturing; retail centers and wholesale merchandising marts; information and communications technology complexes; hotel, convention, tourism and entertainment centers; and large mixed-use residential developments. In our region, with the development of the Luther Forest Technology Campus and the planned location of AMD's newest semiconductor manufacturing facility, this vision is rapidly becoming a reality.

Additionally, research predicts that between 2007 and 2020, annual world-wide commercial passenger traffic will increase from 3.9 billion to 8.2 billion. Over the next 20 years, world air cargo traffic will triple. This provides the basic premise that air logistics and the new economy will become inextricably interwoven.

We encourage the Department of Transportation to restore the Exit 3 Alternative A-1 and provide the region with the visionary and much needed direct access to one of our region's premiere economic drivers, Albany International Airport.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter L. Aust". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter L. Aust  
President & CEO



**BRITISH AMERICAN**

**BERNARD F. CONNERS**  
CHAIRMAN

(518) 786-6000  
(518) 786-6001 FAX

May 20, 2008

The Honorable Astrid C. Glynn  
Commissioner  
NYS Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

Dear Commissioner Glynn,

British American which owns Airport Park, an office development near the Albany Airport, has long supported direct Interstate access to the airport by means of a new Exit 3. Recently it has come to our attention that the Department of Transportation may no longer consider Exit 3 as a viable alternative, but rather is now focusing on a renovation of Exit 4.

The many interchanges and traffic constraints bracketing Exit 4 are a serious impediment to travel and the problems likely will be exacerbated during the next few years. British American and some of its neighbors believe Exit 3 may offer the best solution to those challenges. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that the Department of Transportation continue to explore Exit 3 as an alternative during its impending studies.

With much appreciation for your consideration of this important endeavor, I am

Sincerely,



WWW.RENSCOCHAMBER.COM

255 RIVER STREET / TROY, NEW YORK 12180  
p 518.274.7020 / f 518.272.7729

May 20, 2008

Astrid C. Glynn, Commissioner  
NYS Department of Transportation,  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

Dear Commissioner Glynn:

Rensselaer County and the Capital Region look to the Albany International Airport with great pride. As the gateway to our region, the Airport is host to over 1.5 million enplaned passengers each year. While the New York State Department of Transportation and Albany County have combined to provide a number of improvements to the roadways surrounding the Airport, Albany, unlike airports in Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Newburgh, still lacks direct access to an interstate highway.

Today, nearly three quarters of the Airport passengers arrive from the South via I-87, only to be delayed up to six minutes at the congested intersection of Exit 4 where they compete daily with traffic bound for the many Wolf Road and Albany-Shaker Road office complexes and retail stores. Therefore, I ask that the Department of Transportation give careful consideration to the need for direct Airport access with the timely construction of a new Exit 3.

The current proposals now on the table do not address direct access to the Airport, access that is essential if the Airport is to offer a sound response to the region's emerging economic growth. The Albany County Airport Authority has an aggressive program to attract new airlines and airport-related businesses and jobs to our region as evidenced by the recent announcement that HondaJet will be building its northeast sales and service center at the Airport. But, Airport CEO John O'Donnell has told me that one of the first things other businesses considering locating in the region ask is "do you have direct access to an Interstate?"

The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce believes that restoration of the Exit 3 concept truly supports the best interests of our community and will, through its construction, encourage the growth of area businesses and industry, create new employment opportunities and maintain the Albany International Airport as the "Gateway to the Capital Region."

Sincerely,

  
Linda Hillman  
President



**Raymond J. Melleady**  
Executive Director  
Telephone  
518-437-8310  
Fax  
518-437-8318

May 22, 2008

Astrid C. Glynn  
Commissioner  
NYS Dept. of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road - 6th Floor  
Albany, NY 12232

Dear Commissioner Glynn

I am writing to support the restoration of the Exit 3 project that would provide a direct connection between I-87 and Albany International Airport. Air travel at the Airport has increased by 1 million passengers since 1996. And while the New York State Department of Transportation and Albany County have combined to provide a number of improvements to the roadways surrounding the Airport, it still lacks direct access to the interstate highway network.

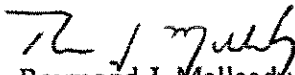
The Exit 3 project has been discussed for over 50 years. Its implementation is critical to the Airport, since nearly three quarters of their 3.2 million annual customers arrive from the south via I-87 through congested intersections at Exit 4, Wolf Road at Albany-Shaker Road and Albany-Shaker at Old Wolf Road.

Stacking traffic at the Exit 4 signal frequently backs up onto the I-87 northbound travel lane during morning and evening peak travel periods. This series of intersections can often take up to 10 minutes to navigate. Exit 3 would relieve the considerable strain put on the impacted intersections and eliminate or reduce delays encountered by non-airport traffic and emergency vehicles.

Improved access to the Airport will help to attract new airlines, new routes and service and new airport business, like maintenance facilities and cargo handlers. It will also spur continued economic development in the areas adjacent to the Airport.

We learned recently that NYSDOT has dismissed further consideration of an Exit 3 interchange in favor of a makeover of Exit 4. I am asking that this matter be reconsidered in discussions with the Albany County Airport Authority, Albany County, the Town of Colonie and others concerned with this project. Thank you.

Cordially,

  
Raymond J. Melleady  
Executive Director

Copy: John A. O'Donnell

David M. Stackrow  
Chairman  
Rensselaer County

Donald C. MacElroy  
Vice Chairman  
Saratoga County

Henry S. DeLegge  
Secretary  
Schenectady County

Arthur F. Young, Jr.  
Treasurer  
Albany County

James Cappiella  
Albany County

Denise Figueroa  
Albany County

C. Michael Ingersoll  
Saratoga County

Norman L. Mille  
Schenectady County

Wayne L. Pratt  
Rensselaer County

Raymond J. Melleady  
Executive Director





May 23, 2008

Astrid C. Glynn, Commissioner  
NYS Department of Transportation,  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

Dear Commissioner Glynn:

Colonie and the Capital Region look to the Albany International Airport with great pride. As the gateway to our region, the Airport is host to over 1.5 million enplaned passengers each year. While the New York State Department of Transportation and Albany County have combined to provide a number of improvements to the roadways surrounding the Airport, Albany, unlike airports in Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Newburgh, still lacks direct access to an interstate highway.

Today, nearly three quarters of the Airport passengers arrive from the South via I-87, only to be delayed up to six minutes at the congested intersection of Exit 4 where they compete daily with traffic bound for the many Wolf Road and Albany-Shaker Road office complexes and retail stores. Therefore, I ask that the Department of Transportation give careful consideration to the need for direct Airport access with the timely construction of a new Exit 3.

The current proposals now on the table do not address direct access to the Airport, access that is essential if the Airport is to offer a sound response to the region's emerging economic growth. The Albany County Airport Authority has an aggressive program to attract new airlines and airport-related businesses and jobs to our region as evidenced by the recent announcement that HondaJet will be building its northeast sales and service center at the Airport. But, Airport CEO John O'Donnell has told me that one of the first things other businesses considering locating in the region ask is "do you have direct access to an Interstate?"

The Colonie Chamber of Commerce believes that restoration of the Exit 3 concept truly supports the best interests of our community and will, through its construction, encourage the growth of area businesses and industry, create new employment opportunities and maintain the Albany International Airport as the "Gateway to the Capital Region."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Tom Nolte".

Tom Nolte  
Executive Director  
[www.coloniechamber.org](http://www.coloniechamber.org)

950 New Loudon Road  
Latham, NY 12110  
ph 518.785.6995  
fax 518.785.7173



**SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.**

Steve Sisneros  
Manager-Properties  
Law, Airports & Public Affairs  
P.O. Box 38811, HDQ-4PF  
2702 Love Field Drive  
Dallas, TX 75235-1611  
(214) 792-4745 FAX (214) 792-4086  
steve.sisneros@wnco.com

May 23, 2008

The Honorable Astrid C. Glynn  
Commissioner  
New York State Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road - 6th Floor  
Albany, NY 12205

Dear Commissioner Glynn:

Southwest Airlines has been a committed partner to the Capital Region since 2000. Over the last eight years, our customers have been able to experience the best of both worlds; a hassle-free terminal at Albany International Airport coupled with low-fares! Anything that improves the customer experience is both good for your community in addition to the airlines that serve it.

Southwest Airlines strongly supports the Albany County Airport Authority in their efforts to improve airport access via a new Exit 3 on Interstate 87. We are aware that this project has been discussed for decades and hope you reconsider the recent decision to pursue another alternative. Ease of access to the airport is essential in our ability to market the Capital Region and attract new customers.

Albany International Airport and Southwest Airlines are an on-going success story. We are proud of what we accomplished to date and look forward to an even stronger business partnership in the years to come.

Best regards,

Steve Sisneros  
Manager - Properties  
Southwest Airlines Co.

Cc: John O'Donnell - ALB ACAA  
Ron Ricks - Executive Vice President Corporate Services  
Bob Montgomery - Vice President Properties



May 20, 2008

John A. O'Donnell  
Chief Executive Officer  
Albany International Airport  
Administration Building  
Suite 200  
Albany, NY 12211-1057

Dear John,

We join the Albany International Airport in its support for direct Interstate access to the airport via a new Exit 3 from I-87 — a project that has been discussed for decades, dating back to the early days of the Northway.

A new Exit 3 would relieve considerable delays through congested intersections at Exit 4, Wolf Road at Albany-Shaker Road and Albany-Shaker at Old Wolf Road. The current Exit 4 intersection often takes too long to navigate, with delays occurring daily during morning and afternoon rush hours and annually during the holiday season.

As such, Exit 3 would reduce or eliminate dangerous northbound backup on the Northway at Exit 4 and would include the previously approved Metro Park/Wolf Road access point to mitigate congestion at Wolf Road and Albany-Shaker Road. Exit 3 would also improve the response time of emergency vehicles and promote cleaner air through elimination of stopped traffic at signals.

Construction of Exit 3 would require very minimal property acquisitions, since 95 percent of the right-of-way occurs on land owned by the airport and Albany County. By avoiding acquisition or relocation of existing businesses or commercial property, the Exit 3 project would consequently maintain the Town of Colonie's tax base.

Although the New York State Department of Transportation favors a makeover of Exit 4 rather than construction of an Exit 3 interchange, such a project still does not address longstanding need for direct access to the airport.

We understand how vitally important the Exit 3 project would be to the airport's 1.6 million visitors each year. Ease of access to the airport is also essential if the airport is to attract new airlines and airport-related business that require Interstate access.

Exit 3 provides the best benefit over cost in comparison with all other alternatives. We join the Albany International Airport in requesting that the New York State Department of Transportation investigate the Exit 3 alternative further to improve direct access to the Capital Region's Airport.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lyn Taylor".

Lyn Taylor  
President/CEO  
Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce



CENTER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH  
anything's possible™

63 State Street  
Albany, New York 12207  
ph 518.465.8975 fx 518.465.6681

May 23, 2008

Commissioner Astrid C. Glynn  
New York State Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

**Re: Albany International Airport  
Interstate 87 – Exit 3 Access Improvements Project**

Dear Commissioner Glynn:

The Center for Economic Growth (CEG) is a non-profit membership-based economic and business development organization committed to visionary regional economic expansion throughout New York State's Capital Region and Tech Valley.

CEG is aware of the challenges the current, limited access to the Albany International Airport has on the growth of our region. The Airport's continued success is important to Tech Valley and upstate New York. We believe that the study of the Exit 3 Access Improvement Project, as well as other viable options, is critical to the Albany Airport's ability to attract new airlines and airport-related business. We also understand the benefits of the Exit 3 Access Improvements Project, including limited relocation of existing business and commercial property; promoting cleaner air through elimination of stopped traffic signals and minimizing congestion, and eliminating dangerous backup of traffic on I-87.

Air travel at Albany International Airport has increased by nearly 500,000 passengers since 1994. While the New York State Department of Transportation and Albany County have combined to provide a number of improvements to the roadways surrounding the Airport, Albany, unlike Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Newburgh, still lacks direct access to the interstate highway system.

CEG has long supported better access to the Albany International Airport. The Exit 3 Project has been discussed for decades, going back to the early days of the Northway. Timely study of the Exit 3 Access Improvements Project is important to fully understanding the cost and effectiveness of the ultimate access improvements needed to ensure our region's competitiveness. At this stage in the planning process, we support and encourage you fully consider the Exit 3 Access Project as part of any review and evaluation of other alternatives.

Thank you very much for all that you and the Department of Transportation do to advance the growth our region.

Very truly yours,

F. Michael Tucker  
President and Chief Executive Officer

CC: Mr. Brian O. Rowback, P.E.  
Regional Director  
NYS Department of Transportation – Region 1

anything's possible

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Environmental Permits, Region 4**

1130 North Westcott Road, Schenectady, New York 12306-2014

**Phone:** (518) 357-2069 • **FAX:** (518) 357-2460

**Website:** [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)



Alexander B. Grannis  
Commissioner

May 22, 2008

Angelo M. Trichilo, P.E.  
Project Manager  
NYS Department of Transportation  
328 State Street  
Schenectady, NY 12305

Re: Interstate 87 - Exit 3/4 Access Improvement Project (Airport Connector)  
P.I.N. 1721.51  
Town of Colonie, Albany County

Dear Mr. Trichilo:

Thank you for providing the summary of the comments you received from the various agencies regarding the several design alternatives considered for the proposed new interchange. We are pleased to see that the design choices have been narrowed down to the Exit 4 Upgrade, Replace Exit 4 and Partial Interchange alternatives, which this department previously recommended for further study. These alternatives would have the least impacts to the freshwater wetlands, wildlife habitat and open space compared to the other alternatives, and would avoid affecting the ecological integrity of the wetland ecosystems in the area by conserving and protecting the buffer areas, open space and upland areas which surround the wetlands.

The summary of comments you provided accurately summarized the department's concerns and recommendations regarding this proposal and we have no further comments to offer at this time. Attached is a copy of our previous comments on the proposal for your reference.

Please note that Karen Gaidasz will now be serving as the project manager on behalf of the Department for permitting issues related to this project, and all other projects within the town of Colonie. Please address all future correspondences to her attention at this same address. Should you have any questions or desire further discussion on this matter, please feel free to contact her at 357-2459 or at [kmgaidas@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:kmgaidas@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

Sincerely,

Angelo A. Marcuccio  
Environmental Analyst

Enclosure





## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189  
518-237-8643  
www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

May 1, 2008

Angelo Trichilo  
NYS Department of Transportation  
328 State Street  
Schenectady, New York 12305

Re: DOT PIN 1721.51.121  
Exit 3/I-87/off I-87 near Albany Airport  
Colonie, Albany County  
**07PR05536**

Dear Ms. Trichilo:

Thank you for continuing to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO has reviewed the materials you submitted in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and relevant implementing regulations.

SHPO appreciates your response to agency comments. We look forward to reviewing the Phase 1A & 1B studies, as well as the project mapping which will identify historic resources. A determination of *effect* will be made after all documentation has been submitted.

SHPO appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (518) 237-8643, ext. 3105 or [annmarie.davis@oprhp.state.ny.us](mailto:annmarie.davis@oprhp.state.ny.us). Please refer to the Project Review (PR) number in any future correspondence regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Davis  
Historic Sites Restoration Coordinator





# New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

## Division of Environmental Permits, Region 4

1130 North Westcott Road, Schenectady, New York 12306-2014

Phone: (518) 357-2069 • FAX: (518) 357-2460

Website: [www.dec.state.ny.us](http://www.dec.state.ny.us)



Alexander B. Grannis  
Commissioner

November 26, 2007

Angelo M. Trichilo, P.E.  
Project Manager  
NYS Department of Transportation  
328 State Street  
Schenectady, NY 12305

Re: Interstate 87 - Exit 3 Interchange Project  
Airport Connector  
P.I.N. 1721.51  
Town of Colonie, Albany County

Dear Mr. Trichilo:

The Department is pleased to have the opportunity to participate as an involved agency in the environmental review of this proposed project and a participant in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is to be prepared. Department staff has reviewed the documents titled *Draft Purpose and Need Statement* and *Range of Alternatives* for the Interstate 87 Airport Connector project that were distributed during the meeting which was conducted at the Town of Colonie offices on October 11, and we have prepared the following comments based upon the information in those documents. Our comments are premised on our view that whatever project design is chosen, while accomplishing the goal of improved access to the Albany Airport and Wolf Road, must also meet the stringent regulatory requirements of both state and federal wetland statutes and regulations which emphasize the preservation, protection and conservation of existing freshwater wetlands and the benefits derived therefrom. Further, continued protection and conservation of the wetland buffer areas, open space, and upland areas (Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve, Cerone and Nemith properties) and the lands currently being farmed (Engels property), along with the avoidance of habitat fragmentation, are indispensable for the protection of these critically important natural resource amenities in this heavily and increasingly developed urban/suburban area.

Based on the design alternatives presented, the Exit 4 Upgrade, Replace Exit 4 and Partial Interchange would have the least wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and thereby meet the alternatives analysis required by state and federal regulations to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and the state regulated 100-foot wetland adjacent area. These regulatory criteria, coupled with meeting the stated measures of effectiveness in avoiding most of the Engels farmland and buildings, point to these alternatives as the ones that should be considered foremost among the others.

The New Exit 4 alternative could potentially be considered among the acceptable alternatives, but there is not enough information on the extent of possible jurisdictional wetlands and habitat that may be present on the site to make a determination on its potential wetland/habitat impacts at this time.

The Replace Exit 4 alternative should be reexamined with an eye to making design changes that could potentially improve the design and reduce its cost. Such a design option might include maintaining the existing Old Wolf Road/southbound I-87 roadways and substituting a roundabout for the traffic light. The same option should be considered for maintaining the Wolf Road/Albany Shaker Road alignment and adding a roundabout.

New Exit 3 has substantial and significant adverse impacts to wetlands and given that the other alternatives have substantially fewer impacts, this alternative would have a difficult time meeting the regulatory standards of avoiding and minimizing wetland impacts. It also would involve taking public parkland, which would likely require State Legislative approval, and substantially fragment this vitally important habitat and contiguous open space. At the advisory committee meeting it was asked if there were any alternatives which should not be considered further. It is our recommendation that Exit 3 not be further considered and the focus of the review shift to the other remaining alternatives as discussed above. It should also be noted that from a cost standpoint, Exit 3 at \$24 million, already ranks third highest in cost, but to be fair, if the costs of replacing the Albany Shaker Road/Northway bridges are added in, it would likely move ahead of the Replace Exit 4 alternative which incorporates this cost. The Exit 4 Upgrade is the least costly alternative and includes the I-87 bridge replacements. Adding in the cost of the I-87 bridges into the Partial Interchange alternative cost would still make it substantially less expensive than the new Exit 3 or new Exit 4 alternatives.

The following are more detailed comments about the alternatives:

**Exit 4 Upgrade** - This alternative provides improved access to and from Wolf Road and the Northway. This alternative would have the least impacts with respect to loss of wetland and wildlife habitat and habitat preservation. Soils maps of the lands on the east side of I-87 (Northway), behind the Homewood Suites facility indicate that these soils are Stafford, which is a somewhat poorly drained soil. There are several drainage courses in this area and based on a review of air photos, additional site investigation would be required as we strongly suspect that this area may prove to be wetland that would fall under federal jurisdiction.

**Replace Exit 4** - There are federal wetlands on the parcel of land on the southeast corner of Albany Shaker Road. These wetlands eventually drain to state Wetland A-10 on the west side of the Northway. Even though the wetlands are physically separated by the Northway and Wolf Road, they are still hydrologically connected via the culverts under these roadways. Aerial photos appear to show that this alternative may impact what would be federal wetland on the west side of the Northway north of Albany-Shaker Road, in the vicinity of the Northway and the northern extension of Wolf Road. This alternative proposes converting Old Wolf Road from a thoroughfare to a dead end road ending with a cul-de-sac. This proposed design would cut off traffic access from Albany-Shaker Road to businesses in that area. As discussed at the beginning of this letter, it is suggested that other design options should be considered, such as maintaining the existing Old Wolf Road/southbound I-87 roadways and substituting a roundabout for the

traffic light. The same option should be considered for maintaining the Wolf Road/Albany Shaker Road alignment, with the addition of a roundabout. The costs would likely decline, and this alternative would be likely be improved by eliminating the proposed cul-de-sac on Old Wolf Road, for example.

**Partial Interchange Alternative** - This alternative needs to be evaluated in the EIS for potential direct impacts to State Wetland A-10 and for habitat fragmentation, including agricultural habitats that serve to enhance the wildlife value of the nearby forested habitats found in much of this wetland. The route of the access ramp would be in close proximity to a former Karner Blue butterfly site behind The Desmond Inn. There is a small overgrown patch of lupine at that location and even though past searches over the years have not found the presence of any butterflies, this site would be found on the record during a Natural Heritage Program query. The site needs to be field surveyed as part of the EIS process to evaluate the nature and quality of the habitat and to determine if any of it would be impacted by this alternative. It is not clear if the proposed configuration at the end of the on/off ramp that will connect with Albany Shaker Road would require a traffic signal or a roundabout. Also, while the gateway effect is not an environmental, regulatory or transportation effectiveness criterion, unlike state and federal wetlands, it should be noted that visually, this alternative provides a similar gateway effect as Exit 3. This alternative improves on previous designs with less impact to the Engels Farm and Buildings. Additional components to this design should be considered to ensure that there will be continued easy access between the agricultural fields and for the preservation and protection of topsoil during construction for use in any on-site restoration and mitigation, as may be needed.

**New Exit 4** - Based on current mapping, this alternative would have relatively minor impacts to wildlife habitat in the vicinity of state wetland A-10, Ann Lee Pond and the adjacent agricultural lands. However, this alternative would impose substantial impacts to the undeveloped area on the east side of the Northway to construct the on/off ramp. This area is primarily forested and currently encompasses more than 75 acres of contiguous land. Due to its size, it has substantial wildlife habitat value. Soils maps indicate that this area contains two types of hydric soils - Granby loamy fine sand and Carlisle muck. In undisturbed conditions, which appears to apply in this case, these soils can be expected to support freshwater wetlands. Therefore, it appears likely that there would be at least federal wetland at this location, and the potential for state regulated wetlands, depending on the number of acres involved. Before this alternative is progressed, the size and distribution of wetlands on the site would need to be identified. This alternative would also have impacts to the Engel farmland property.

**Exit 3 Alternative** - This alternative proposes a new road directly through wetland A-10 and would have substantial and direct impacts to wetlands, wildlife and wildlife habitat. This road would substantially fragment one of the largest remaining blocks of natural wetland habitat in this area, encompassing approximately 441 acres, which cannot be replaced elsewhere. These lands form part of the last large contiguous open space area along Shaker Creek and its tributaries between the Northway and Stump Pond in an area that is experiencing heavy development. It would also be located through a portion of the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve. This alternative does not involve taking commercial businesses because development has been precluded due to the past protection theses lands have received due to the Freshwater Wetlands

Act. Numerous developments have been proposed for this site over the years which have not advanced due this area's wildlife and habitat value. Some of these lands were sold to the Airport Authority, with the understanding that they would not be utilized for development. Alternative 3 proposes the road through part of what is a wetland mitigation/creation area established by the Airport Authority for wetland impacts associated with past airport development/expansion projects. It would be contrary to the concept and overall goal of wetland mitigation/preservation to now utilize these lands for development. Their continued protection is not only consistent with wetland law, but also represents nearly 30 years of consistent project by project regulatory decision-making in this area with the intent of maintaining this critical habitat for the future generations. It is our judgement that this alternative has the most wetland impacts and does meet the avoid/minimize criteria compared to the other alternatives and would not meet New York State Article 24, nor federal wetland regulatory requirements under Section 404 (b)(1) criteria.

In summary, it is our position that the planning and design for this overall project should focus on alternatives that not only improve airport and Wolf Road access and meet the stated measures of effectiveness, but also ones that meet state and federal regulatory standards and criteria to avoid and minimize the filling of wetlands and wetland adjacent area. Further, the alternative chosen must avoid bisecting and fragmenting the large block of open land and its associated wetlands and protect the ecological integrity of the adjacent Albany County Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve by conserving and protecting the buffer areas, open space and upland areas which surround the wetlands. These lands form part of the last large contiguous open space along Shaker Creek and its tributaries between the Northway and Stump Pond. Their protection is not only consistent with the wetland laws and regulations but also represents an important legacy for the future, and builds upon nearly 30 years of statutory protection and project by project decision-making in this area.

Based on the various alternatives presented, we believe that continuing review should focus on the Exit 4 Upgrade, Replace Exit 4 and Partial Interchange alternatives as they would have the least wetland/habitat impacts compared to the other alternatives, under the alternatives analysis required by state and federal regulations. With more information, the New Exit 4 alternative may also be part of this group as well. These alternatives, with some possible modifications, should be part of this continuing EIS process. As discussed above, Exit 3 in the face of the other alternatives, would not meet the regulatory criteria of avoidance and minimization of wetland and wetland impacts, and in response to the inquiry by NYS DOT at the advisory committee meeting, we recommend that it not be considered further.

I will be serving as the project manager on behalf of the Department for permitting issues. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or desire further discussion on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Angelo A. Marcuccio", written in a cursive style.

Angelo A. Marcuccio  
Environmental Analyst



MICHAEL G. BRESLIN  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

COUNTY OF ALBANY  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
112 STATE STREET, ROOM 200  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207-2021  
(518) 447-7040 - FAX (518) 447-5589  
www.albanycounty.com

MICHAEL PERRIN  
DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

November 5, 2007

Angelo M. Tricholo, P.E.  
Highway Design Supervisor  
NYS Department of Transportation Region 1  
328 State Street  
Schenectady, New York 12305-2302

Re: Interstate 87 Exit 3, Airport Connector

Dear Mr. Tricholo:

Albany County is very interested in the I-87, Exit 3 project. We support all the reasons listed in the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYS DOT) Purpose and Need Statement. The County is particularly interested in improving the access to the Albany International Airport; protecting park land, wetlands, and agricultural lands in the area; and making connections to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. We believe that it is very important that this project progress on the proposed schedule for construction in 2012.

The County has completed its review of the Range of Alternatives and believes the new Exit 3 Alternative best meets the needs stated above. With further development, this alternative can meet all the project objectives and minimize any negative project impacts. It also compares favorably with the most expensive options being considered by your office.

Notwithstanding the overall benefits of this project, we are very concerned about the Exit 3 Alternative's impacts on the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve, the Engel Farm, and the federal wetlands in the area. Every effort must be made to avoid negative impacts to these properties or, if not possible, to completely mitigate the impacts to them. As you know, Ann Lee Pond is a County-owned facility. We believe that mitigation to protect the Ann Lee Pond park land is reasonable, feasible and necessary.

Finally, we understand that the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) has programmed National Highway System funds for construction for this project in 2012 in their Transportation Improvement Program. We also understand that NYS DOT has not included this construction funding in their capital plan. Because we believe that this project has regional significance, we strongly encourage the NYS DOT to address this discrepancy and to program these funds in 2012.

In the past the County has actively participated in the development phases of this project. We look forward to making further progress on this project and will continue to be very supportive and active. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input. If you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Breslin

cc: John A. O'Donnell, P.E., Albany International Airport  
John P. Poorman, CDTC Staff Director  
Michael V. Branchini, Commissioner of Public Works  
Mark Fitzsimmons, Director of Economic Development, Conservation & Planning



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau  
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

November 20, 2000

Peter I. Howard  
NYS Department of Transportation  
84 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12208

Dear Mr. Howard:

Re: DOT PIN 1721.51.121  
Exit 3/I 87  
Colonie, Albany County  
00PR4905

Thank you for requesting the comments of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). We have reviewed the Pre-Reconnaissance Survey for the PIN 1721.51.121 project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the relevant implementing regulations.

Based upon this review, the SHPO approves the Pre-Reconnaissance Survey report and concurs with its recommendations. We look forward to receiving the results of the Phase 1B reconnaissance survey when it is completed.

The SHPO will not be able to assess project impacts to the Watervliet Shaker Historic District or to archeological resources until the Phase 1B survey is completed and plans for the project are provided.

When responding please be sure to refer to the SHPO project review (PR) number noted above. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3255.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Kuhn  
Assistant Director

RDK:bsd





**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**  
**Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources**  
**Wildlife Resources Center - New York Natural Heritage Program**  
700 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, New York 12110-2400  
Phone: (518) 783-3932 FAX: (518) 783-3916



October 10, 2000

Dr. Sally M. Newman  
Integrated Site Landscape Architect  
886 East Brighton Ave  
Syracuse, NY 13205

Dear Dr. Newman:

In response to your recent request, we have reviewed the New York Natural Heritage program databases with respect to the proposed Improvements to Interstate 87, Exit 3, and the Airport International Airport and Wolf Road, area as indicated on the map you provided, located in the Town of Colonie, Albany County.

Enclosed is a report of rare or state-listed animals and plants, significant natural communities, and other significant habitats, which our databases indicate occur, or may occur, on your site or in the immediate vicinity of your site. This information is considered sensitive and may not be released to the public without permission from the New York Natural Heritage Program.

For most sites, comprehensive field surveys have not been conducted; the enclosed report only includes records from our databases. We cannot provide a definitive statement on the presence or absence of all rare or state-listed species or significant natural communities. This information should not be substituted for on-site surveys that may be required for environmental impact assessment.

Our databases are continually growing as records are added and updated. If this proposed project is still under development one year from now, we recommend that you contact us again so that we may update this response with the most current information.

This response applies only to known occurrences of rare or state-listed animals and plants, of significant natural communities, and of other significant habitats. For information regarding regulated areas or permits that may be required under state law (e.g., regulated wetlands), please contact the appropriate NYS DEC Regional Office, Division of Environmental Permits, at the enclosed address.

Sincerely,

*Teresa Mackey*  
Teresa Mackey, Information Services  
NY Natural Heritage Program

Encs.

cc: Reg. 4, Wildlife Mgr.  
Reg. 4, Fisheries Mgr.  
Peter Nye, Endangered Species Unit, Delmar



OCT 27 2000



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

3817 LUKER ROAD  
CORTLAND, NY 13045

October 25, 2000

Dr. Sally M. Newman  
Senior Biologist  
Integrated Site Landscape Architect, P.C.  
886 East Brighton Avenue  
Syracuse, NY 13205

Dear Dr. Newman:

This responds to your letter of September 20, 2000, requesting information on the presence of endangered or threatened species in the vicinity of the proposed improvements to I-87 between Exit 3 and the Airport Connector in the Town of Colonie, Albany County, New York (PIN 1721.51.121).

The Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*) is known to occur in the vicinity of the project area. This species is listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Potential habitat of the Karner blue butterfly is distinguished by the presence of the plant wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) which is the only known food plant for the larvae; however, other plants in the area may provide nectar sources used by the butterflies.

An evaluation of any existing habitat at the project site, and its potential to support the Karner blue butterfly or wild lupine, should be completed. If the evaluation indicates that the site has the potential to support the Karner blue butterfly or its habitat, the site should be surveyed by a qualified person to determine the presence or absence of this species. Surveys for wild lupine should be conducted when the plants are readily observable, and if wild lupine is present, surveys for the Karner blue butterfly should be conducted during the second, or preferably both, flight periods.

The project's environmental documents should identify any direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the Karner blue butterfly or its habitat, and include appropriate measures, if necessary, to protect this species and its habitat. This information should be forwarded to this office and it will be used to evaluate potential impacts on the Karner blue butterfly or its habitat, and to determine the need for further consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Except for the Karner blue butterfly, and occasional transient individuals, no other Federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species under our jurisdiction are known to exist in the project impact area. In addition, no habitat in the project impact area is currently designated or proposed "critical habitat" in accordance with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Therefore, no Biological Assessment or

further Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act is required with the Service. Should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species or critical habitat becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered. A compilation of Federally listed and proposed endangered and threatened species in New York is enclosed for your information.

The above comments pertaining to endangered species under our jurisdiction are provided pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. This response does not preclude additional Service comments under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act or other legislation.

This species is also listed as endangered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Any plans for surveys, their timing, and the results should be coordinated with both this office and with the State. The State contact for the Karner blue butterfly is Mr. Peter Nye, Endangered Species Unit, Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar, NY 12054-9767 (telephone: [518] 439-7635).

For additional information on fish and wildlife resources or State-listed species, we suggest you contact:

New York State Department of  
Environmental Conservation  
Region 4  
1150 N. Westcott Road  
Schenectady, NY 12306  
(518) 357-2066

New York State Department of  
Environmental Conservation  
Wildlife Resources Center - Information Services  
New York Natural Heritage Program  
700 Troy-Schenectady Road  
Latham, NY 12110-2400  
(518) 783-3932

National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps may or may not be available for the project area. However, while the NWI maps are reasonably accurate, they should not be used in lieu of field surveys for determining the presence of wetlands or delineating wetland boundaries for Federal regulatory purposes. Copies of specific NWI maps can be obtained from:

Cornell Institute for Resource Information Systems  
302 Rice Hall  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853  
(607) 255-4864

Work in certain waters and wetlands of the United States may require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If a permit is required, in reviewing the application pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Service may concur, with or without stipulations, or recommend denial of the permit depending upon the potential adverse impacts on fish and wildlife resources associated with project implementation. The need for a Corps permit may be determined by contacting Mr. Joseph Seebode, Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, NY 10278 (telephone: [212] 264-3996).

If you require additional information please contact Michael Stoll at (607) 753-9334.

Sincerely,

*Mark W. Clough*

**ACTING FOR**

David A. Stilwell  
Field Supervisor

Enclosure

cc: NYSDEC, Schenectady, NY (Environmental Permits)  
NYSDEC, Latham, NY  
NYSDEC, Delmar, NY (Attn: P. Nye)  
COE, New York, NY



## **AGENCY COORDINATION TO DATE**

A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) that is comprised of representatives from involved public agencies was formed to oversee the project's development. The represented agencies include:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- New York State Thruway Authority
- New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Preservation (OPRHP)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
- Albany County Department of Public Works
- Albany International Airport
- Town of Colonie
- Village of Colonie

### **August 15, 2000:**

An initial PAC kick-off meeting was held with all attendees to discuss the purpose of the committee, the project background, the project needs and objectives, the project area issues, the NYSDOT design process, and the expectations of the committee.

### **August 1, 2001:**

A progress meeting for the PAC was held to discuss project progress to date and to present conceptual alternatives for review and comment by the PAC.

### **October 17, 2005:**

A progress meeting for the PAC was held to introduce the Conceptual Alternative Screening document for review by the PAC.

### **November 21, 2005:**

A progress meeting for the PAC was held to discuss comments or questions regarding the information contained in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document. Recommendations from the PAC on the alternatives presented in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document was requested to be submitted to NYSDOT by December 5, 2005.

The PAC was reformed into a group of Cooperating and Participating Agencies when the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the July 16, 2007 Federal Register to inform agencies and the public of the beginning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the proposed project. The Cooperating and Participating agencies include:

- Federal Highway Administration – Lead Agency
- NYS Department of Transportation – Joint Lead Agency
- US Army Corps of Engineers – Cooperating / Participating Agency
- US Environmental Protection Agency – Cooperating / Participating Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service – Cooperating / Participating Agency
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation – Cooperating / Participating Agency
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets – Cooperating / Participating Agency
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation – Cooperating / Participating Agency
- Federal Aviation Administration – Participating Agency
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Participating Agency
- Capital District Transportation Committee – Participating Agency
- Albany County Executive's Office – Participating Agency

- Town of Colonie – Participating Agency
- Village of Colonie – Participating Agency
- City of Albany – Participating Agency
- Albany County Airport Authority – Participating Agency
- NYS Thruway Authority – Participating Agency
- Capital District Transportation Authority – Participating Agency

**October 11, 2007:**

A NEPA Scoping meeting was held for the Cooperating and Participating Agencies. Comments on the Range of Alternatives under consideration and the project Purpose and Need were accepted through November 2007. A Coordination Plan was also developed and distributed to the Cooperating and Participating Agencies.

**April 2, 2009:**

A progress meeting was held to discuss comments or questions on the NEPA Scoping Report, including the feasible alternatives to be evaluated during preliminary design, the decision making and coordination processes.

**June 1, 2011:**

A progress meeting was held to review the preliminary investigation of engineering considerations and environmental impacts of the feasible alternatives. A summary package, including descriptions, figures, and travel time and delay information was distributed to each agency along with a revised Coordination Plan. At this time, the Upgrade Alternative was dismissed from further consideration since it did not meet the project's Purpose and Need, leaving only the Diamond Alternative and Flyover Alternative. Comments on the preliminary investigation of engineering considerations and environmental impacts were accepted through June 21, 2011.

Meeting summaries from the PAC / Cooperating and Participating Agency meetings are included in this appendix. The meeting summaries include a list of attendees and a summary of the questions and comments received during the meetings.



## SUMMARY OF MEETING

**PIN 1721.51.121**

**Scoping and Highway Design Services  
Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3, Airport Connector  
Town of Colonie, Albany County**

**Date:** August 15, 2000

**Place:** Town of Colonie  
Public Safety Bldg.

**Time:** 10:00 AM

**CHA File:** 9456

**Attendees:**

Tom Werner	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Richard Carlson	NYSDOT
Dave Capobianco	NYSDOT
Matt Brower	NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets
Robert Davies	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Bill Gates	FHWA
Kristina Younger	Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
Dennis Fitzgerald	CDTA
John Poorman	CDTC
Mark Hixon	NYS Thruway Authority
Heidi Firstencel	US Army Corps of Engineers
Michael Franchini	Albany County DPW
Kenneth Markuhas	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Preservation
John O'Donnell	Albany International Airport
Mary Brizzell	Town of Colonie
Bob Mitchell	Town of Colonie
Stephen Schassler	NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Bill Clarke	NYSDEC
Mike Higgins	NYSDEC
Ray Rumanowski	Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP (CHA)
Chris DiPalma	CHA

**PURPOSE:**

This meeting was the kickoff meeting for the Project Advisory Committee on the subject project. A technical presentation was made outlining the purpose of the committee, project background, needs, and objectives, project area issues, the NYSDOT design process and expectations of the committee. A handout of the presentation slides was provided to each attendee. Questions and/or comments were received following the presentation. These are summarized below.

**John Poorman:** We need to look at this project as an overall traffic improvement, not a one shot solution.

**Bill Clarke:** What is the time frame of the traffic problems?

**David Capobianco:** General rule is 20 years following construction; so we're looking at 2026.

**Bill Clarke:** Is Level of Service the deciding factor?

**David Capobianco:** Level of Service is one factor that is considered.

- Bill Clarke:** Most of the fixes that we look at, in terms of construction, are really temporary fixes that can have permanent losses to the environment (wetlands, historic resources, etc.)
- Richard Carlson:** Generally we look at the 20 year outlook in terms of the Capital District long-term plans. With this project, we are looking at something that will be effective beyond 20 years. I agree that this solution will not be a final solution, but will be effective for the first quarter of the next century.
- Kristina Younger:** At what point does money come into play in the scoping process?  
**John Poorman:** This project has is a line item in the long-range plan.
- Kristina Younger:** So cost is not a constraint?  
**John Poorman:** If a \$100 million solution is required, then it is unlikely that we'll go with that solution. We look more at the opportunity costs. We are looking for something that is reasonable for the community.
- Richard Carlson:** There are other costs, such as scoping and design, that come well before construction. There will be significant project cost before construction, but we have set aside money to make sure that we will have something to build in 5 years.
- David Capobianco:** It's a possibility that we may go with something that will work for the 2016 scenario over the 2026 design depending on cost.
- Kristina Younger:** How does the Albany Shaker Road improvements relate to this project?  
**David Capobianco:** Albany Shaker Road was designed independently and has independent utility.
- Kristina Younger:** Will Albany Shaker Road improvements be considered in an Exit 3 design?  
**David Capobianco:** Yes.
- Tom Werner:** Are there other people/agencies we should invite?  
**John Poorman:** The Village would be a good idea.  
**Bill Clarke:** The Village would be good to invite because of Sunset Terrace issues.
- David Capobianco:** Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November. Who would like to host?  
**John Poorman:** We'll host.  
**David Capobianco:** OK, then it will be at CDTC.

Please report any additions or corrections in writing within ten calendar days to the undersigned at Clough, Harbour and Associates LLP.

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Raymond J. Rumanowski, P.E.  
Project Manager

RJR/dcc

c: Attendees

Rich Lessard, NYSDOT

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**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**PIN 1721.51.121**  
**Scoping and Highway Design Services**  
**Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3, Airport Connector**  
**Town of Colonie, Albany County**

**Date:** August 1, 2001

**Time:** 1:30 PM

**Place:** Town of Colonie, Public Operations Building

**CHA File:** 9456

**Attendees:**

Tom Werner	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Richard Carlson	NYSDOT
Matt Bromirski	NYSDOT
Mark Silo	NYSDOT
Steve Szanto	NYSDOT
Dan Hitt	NYSDOT
Peter Howard	NYSDOT
Peter VanKeuren	NYSDOT
Jeff Marko	NYSDOT
Dave Watson	NYSDOT
Matt Brower	NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets
Robert Davies	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Bill Gates	FHWA
Kristina Younger	Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
John Poorman	CDTC
Chris O'Neill	CDTC
Mark Hixson	NYS Thruway Authority
Heidi Firstencel	US Army Corps of Engineers
Michael Franchini	Albany County DPW
Kenneth Markunas	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Preservation
John O'Donnell	Albany International Airport
Steve Iachetta	Albany International Airport
Mary Brizzell	Town of Colonie
Frank Leak	Village of Colonie
Bill Clarke	NYSDEC
Mike Higgins	NYSDEC
Ray Rumanowski	Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP (CHA)
Lee Ecker	CHA
Lisa Katcher	CHA

**PURPOSE:**

This meeting was the first progress meeting for the Project Advisory Committee on the subject project. A technical presentation was made outlining the project objectives and committee expectations set forth at the kickoff meeting in August 2000, the study area and project constraints, three of the conceptual alternatives thought to meet the project objectives, and feedback desired from the committee. A handout of the presentation slides was provided to each attendee. Questions and/or comments were received following the presentation. These are summarized below.

**John Poorman:** Project objectives clearly intended to use "improve" in regard to traffic because we may not be able to reach all goals in regard to level of service. We will be making tradeoffs since no solution will solve all of the issues raised.

- Heidi Firstencel:** Do we need to improve access to the airport and Wolf Road together? Can we concentrate on improving one or the other?
- Matt Bromirski:** Airport and Wolf Road access is tied together. Impossible to look at one and not affect the other.
- Bill Clarke:** We should look at rebuilding the existing infrastructure. There should be some rational presented on why the construction of new roads is necessary. A good range of alternatives should be presented to show why a rebuild within the existing right of way is not feasible.
- Historically there has been a regulatory investment in preserving and protecting a large open area surrounding Ann Lee Pond. This area should try to be preserved. The two trumpet interchanges preserve it the most.
- It appears that federal and state wetlands will be impacted; therefore, we need to show an alternative that rebuilds the existing infrastructure. A combination of the diamond and trumpet interchanges should be looked at: a partial diamond connecting I-87 and Wolf Road at Exit 3 and a trumpet connecting the airport to I-87 at Exit 4.
- Mike Franchini:** The public knows there is a project under consideration; therefore, a public meeting should be held soon. It would be good to show the public that progress is being made and there are some good alternatives under consideration.
- Mary Brizzell:** Clearer mapping is needed before a public meeting can be held. More detail regarding potential impacts is needed because those are the questions that will come up, especially from the Engels.
- What is the effect of the project to the Watervliet-Shaker Road / Old Wolf Road intersection? I'm interested in knowing who will be responsible for making any improvements if needed.
- John O'Donnell:** Is the Old Wolf Road crossing a fly-over (two trumpet interchange concept)?
- Lee Ecker:** Yes. An at grade intersection with Old Wolf Road was not geometrically feasible.
- Ken Markunas:** A discussion of the advantages and comparison of the alternatives is needed.
- Lee Ecker:** A comparison of alternatives would be difficult because the magnitude of impacts is unknown. It would need to be purely qualitative right now.
- Richard Carlson:** Each alternative appears to present various tradeoffs –these we do know now.
- John Poorman:** The alternatives shown each show some traffic improvement. We need to find out from you what is good or problematic. We want to refine the alternatives presented.
- Heidi Firstencel:** The diamond alternative jumps out as having a lot of impacts to the Ann Lee Pond Preserve.

Why is a reconstruction of Exit 4 not being considered? The alternatives shown do not appear to provide

enough improvement for the existing problems.

- John O'Donnell:** The modified trumpet design is an undesirable solution for the airport. The airport would prefer a solution that provides free access from I-87 north and south. The existing route is heavily used by through traffic going to and from Route 7.
- Lee Ecker:** Traffic at the Albany Shaker Road/Old Wolf Road intersection would be greatly reduced by diverting the I-87 northbound traffic to the airport onto the new connector road, thereby helping the I-87 southbound to the airport movement and the airport to I-87 southbound movement.
- We could also look at an additional ramp connecting Albany Shaker Road near the airport to I-87 southbound, but there would be some tradeoffs such as additional wetland and/or farmland impacts.
- Ken Markunas:** Lay people cannot visualize the fly-overs. The ramps will have significant visual impacts to the area. We need to display the alternatives differently at a public meeting so that the public understands the impacts.
- Matt Bromirski:** Should the public meeting show alternatives or should it be purely a scoping meeting?
- Richard Carlson:** The public knows that we've been working on this project. We need to show them what we've been doing. However, the presentation as it is now is too technical. The graphics need to be changed and visualization tools used. The CORSIM model helps to educate the public.
- Frank Leak:** The Sunset Boulevard development will be upset about noise impacts from some of the proposed ramps. We will need to provide them with details on how close the ramps will be to their property, any impacts, and mitigation.
- Heidi Firstencel:** We need look at wetland quality and functional assessment early. It would help with permitting to know the mitigation ratios and meet them.
- Kristina Younger:** Pedestrian accommodations are important. It is nice to see that pedestrian issues have been identified and CDTA is willing to work on transit enhancements. However, budget constraints need to be considered.
- Richard Carlson:** This project was put on the TIP due to its regional importance. We need to keep in mind that the project should be a net plus to the area.
- Matt Bromirski:** Written comments sent to my attention are welcome. I am also willing to arrange one-on-one meetings. The sooner each groups' issues are addressed the better.

Please report any additions or corrections in writing within ten calendar days to the undersigned at Clough, Harbour and Associates LLP.

---

Lisa M. Katcher



**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**PIN 1721.51.121**  
**Scoping and Highway Design Services**  
**Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3, Airport Connector**  
**Town of Colonie, Albany County**

**DATE:** October 17, 2005

**TIME:** 1:00 PM

**PLACE:** Town of Colonie, Public Operations Building

**CHA FILE:** 9456

**ATTENDEES:**

Tom Werner	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Jim Bridges	NYSDOT
Rob Cherry	NYSDOT
Angelo Trichilo	NYSDOT
Bob Hansen	NYSDOT
Gerardo Mendoza	NYSDOT
Dave Rettig	NYSDOT
Geoff Wood	NYSDOT
Dan Gates	NYSDOT
Matt Brower	NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
Bill Clarke	NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
Don Bell	NYS Thruway Authority
Roslyn Weber	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
John Poorman	Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Chris O'Neill	CDTC
Dave Jukins	CDTC
Stephen Iachetta	Albany International Airport
Kristina Younger	Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
Michael Franchini	Albany County DPW
Robert Mitchell	Town of Colonie
Mary Brizzell	Town of Colonie
Philip Pearson	Town of Colonie
Ron Laberge	Village of Colonie
Lee Ecker	Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP (CHA)
Manny Salorio	CHA
Lisa Katcher	CHA

**PURPOSE:**

This meeting was the third progress meeting for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) on the subject project.

**MINUTES:**

- The meeting began with a brief introduction by Rob Cherry of NYSDOT, followed by opening remarks by Tom Werner, the Regional Director of NYSDOT Region 1.
- Lee Ecker of CHA made a technical presentation outlining the progress to date and summarizing the previous two PAC meetings and the public meeting. The presentation also introduced the Conceptual Alternatives Screening document, which contains a summary of 19 conceptual alternatives that are being considered by the NYSDOT for the project. The document is being provided to the PAC members to solicit feedback on the conceptual alternatives.

- The PAC will reconvene on November 21, 2005 to discuss any comments or questions regarding the information contained in the document, prior to the PAC members providing formal feedback on the conceptual alternatives.
- NYSDOT is requesting that each agency and organization represented in the PAC provide formal recommendations regarding which conceptual alternatives should be progressed into preliminary engineering and environmental studies. The PAC members are asked to use the Conceptual Alternatives Screening Document to perform an individual evaluation of the concepts, and select up to 5 conceptual alternatives that fulfill the project objectives and are worthy for further consideration. The recommendations should be in a written format with sufficient backup to support the member organization's position on each recommended alternative. NYSDOT is requesting that the recommendations be forwarded to the Department by December 5, 2005.
- Questions and comments were received following the presentation. These are summarized below:

**John Poorman, CDTC:**

Mr. Poorman noted that the project is listed on the 2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Project (TIP) list with a construction budget of \$30 million. The traditional method of evaluating concepts looks at maximizing the benefit of the project and not necessarily within a specified budget. The available construction budget should be considered when evaluating these concepts since not all will fall within the available budget.

The construction costs shown in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document do not include right-of-way costs. Right-of-way costs, engineering costs and construction inspection costs can add up to 50% of the construction cost for a project of this magnitude.

Environmental impacts may be under-represented by including them only as "Other Considerations." Avoiding or minimizing these impacts is an important factor and, although they are considered for all NYSDOT projects, including them under "Other Considerations" and not "Project Objectives" makes it appear as though they are not as important an issue as the "Project Objectives."

Has the current perspective on roundabouts made it into the Conceptual Alternative Screening document, specifically in regard to measuring a concept's effectiveness through the number of left turns?

**Rob Cherry, NYSDOT:**

Roundabouts will be considered once alternatives have been chosen for preliminary design.

**Dave Rettig, NYSDOT:**

The construction costs included in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document are based on 2001 pricing, and should be used for relative comparison purposes only.

Construction funds have been identified on the TIP for the purpose of gaining Federal aid for the project. The NYSDOT currently has funding programmed for preliminary engineering, but not for construction.

It was noted that, based on the recent economic initiatives to develop high-tech research and developments within the Capital District, the objectives of the Exit 3 project may start to be driven by economic development, not capacity constraints.



**Bill Clarke, NYSDEC:**

It was noted that, based on the graphics in the presentation, it appears that there are data gaps in the wetland inventory. Wetland impacts will not be definitive until an official wetland report is complete.

It would be helpful to identify the effect on travel time to and from the airport instead of gauging an alternative's ability to improve access by the number of left turns required.

The recent addition of significant long term parking on the eastern side of the airport may change the access needs for the airport versus what was needed a few years ago. A large number of trips may no longer travel to the terminal, but may instead be destined for the long-term parking areas to the east.

**Steve Iachetta, Albany International Airport:**

The airport's data indicates that the terminal currently attracts the greatest percentage of trips at the airport, rather than the long-term lots and should still be considered as the primary destination point for traffic traveling to the airport.

Please report any additions or corrections in writing within ten calendar days to the undersigned at Clough, Harbour and Associates LLP.

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Lisa M. Westrick, P.E.  
Project Engineer

LMW/dcc

c: Attendees

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**SUMMARY OF MEETING**  
**PIN 1721.51.121**  
**Scoping and Highway Design Services**  
**Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3, Airport Connector**  
**Town of Colonie, Albany County**

**DATE:** November 21, 2005 **TIME:** 1:00 PM  
**PLACE:** Town of Colonie, Public Operations Building **CHA FILE:** 9456

**ATTENDEES:**

Tom Werner	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Jim Bridges	NYSDOT
Rob Cherry	NYSDOT
Angelo Trichilo	NYSDOT
Gerardo Mendoza	NYSDOT
Geoff Wood	NYSDOT
Dan Gates	NYSDOT
Matt Brower	NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
John Brizzell	NYS Thruway Authority
Roslyn Weber	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
John Poorman	Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Chris O'Neill	CDTC
Dave Jukins	CDTC
Michael Franchini	Albany County DPW
Mary Witkowski	Albany County Executive's Office
Robert Mitchell	Town of Colonie
Mary Brizzell	Town of Colonie
Philip Pearson	Town of Colonie
Ron Laberge	Village of Colonie
Lee Ecker	Clough, Harbour & Associates LLP (CHA)
Manny Salorio	CHA
Lisa Westrick	CHA

**PURPOSE:**

This meeting was the fourth progress meeting for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) on the subject project. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss any comments or questions regarding the information contained in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document distributed at the third PAC meeting on October 17, 2005, prior to the PAC members providing formal feedback on the conceptual alternatives.

**MINUTES:**

- The meeting began with a brief introduction by Angelo Trichilo of NYSDOT Region 1.
- NYSDOT is requesting input from the PAC members regarding which conceptual alternatives should be progressed into preliminary engineering and environmental studies. The PAC members are asked to use the Conceptual Alternatives Screening (CAS) Document to perform an individual evaluation of the concepts, and select up to 5 conceptual alternatives for further consideration. The recommendations should be in a written format with sufficient backup to support the member organization's position on each recommended alternative. NYSDOT is requesting that the recommendations be forwarded to the Department by December 5, 2005.

- The NYSDOT will review the alternatives and consider the input from the PAC, input from NYSDOT functional groups, and the five NYSDOT Priority Result Areas to make a decision on which alternatives will be progressed into preliminary design. The five Priority Result Areas include improving system mobility and reliability, increasing safety, improving environmental conditions, promoting economic sustainability, and enhancing security. The NYSDOT anticipates that a decision will be reached by the Spring of 2006.
- The NYSDOT noted that the New York City EPA has contacted them to discuss the Conceptual Alternative Screening document. The NYC EPA was under the impression that only alternatives that passed the Level 1 MOEs could be selected. NYSDOT clarified that up to 5 alternatives from all of the alternatives contained in the Conceptual Alternative Screening could be selected. A copy of the October 17, 2005 PAC meeting presentation was delivered to the NYC EPA since they were not in attendance.
- NYSDOT also noted as a follow-up to a comment from the previous meeting that roundabouts will be considered for all signalized intersections for all alternatives.
- Questions and comments are summarized below (questions, comments, and responses are paraphrased):

**Question/Comment: Philip Pearson, Town of Colonie:**

Three projects are currently being progressed near the subject project – relocation of the Albany-Shaker Road and Maxwell Road intersection, extension of Maxwell Road to Marcus Boulevard, and the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Old Wolf Road, Old Niskayuna Road and Watervliet-Shaker Road. Are the impacts of these projects being included in the analysis for the proposed Exit 3 alternatives?

Also, will intersection designs such as a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) be considered as part of Alternative A-1?

**Response: Jim Bridges, NYSDOT:**

The Department is aware of the projects at Maxwell Road and Old Niskayuna Road and will consider their impacts while analyzing the Exit 3 alternatives.

**Response: Lee Ecker, CHA:**

Traffic forecasts used for the Exit 3 project include the two Maxwell Road projects mentioned, as well as all projects that are contained in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Alternatives included in the CAS are general access concepts. Different intersection designs will be evaluated during preliminary design to determine what is most appropriate for each location. This could include, but is not limited to, a SPUI in lieu of a diamond interchange for Alternative A-1.

**Question: Michael Franchini, Albany County DPW:**

Why is Alternative A-1 considered semi-direct while A-3 is direct? If a roundabout were used in Alternative A-1 at the interchange, would it then provide a direct connection between the Northway and Albany International Airport?

**Response: Lee Ecker, CHA:**

The semi-direct connection is defined as a connection requiring a vehicle to travel on, at most, one additional roadway between the ramp and its origin or destination. Alternative A-1 requires vehicles to travel through a signalized intersection onto the proposed connector roadway between the Northway and Albany International Airport. Alternative A-3 provides a free flowing connection via a roundabout between the Northway and Albany International Airport. *(Subsequent to the meeting, the two alternatives were compared, and CHA recommends that the I-87 northbound to the airport connection in Alternative A-3 should technically be labeled as semi-direct.)*

**Comment: Chris O'Neill, CDTC:**

It appears that Alternative A-1 does not meet the Level 1 MOEs because it does not provide the new connection between Albany-Shaker Road and the Northway southbound within a ¼ mile radius of the existing connection.

The use of a roundabout in Alternative B-3 instead of constructing a bridge to carry the Northway northbound exit ramp over Albany-Shaker Road could reduce cost and impacts to adjacent properties while still providing an adequate connection.

**Response: Angelo Trichilo, NYSDOT:**

A roundabout will be considered as an alternative to the connection shown in Alternative B-3 for any alternatives that contain this connection and are selected for further consideration in preliminary design.

**Comment: John Poorman, CDTC:**

The preliminary design alternatives may be a mix of the ones presented in the document.

Ramp metering should be considered for alternatives such as A-1 and A-3 because they provide more northbound entrance ramp capacity. If additional traffic is added to the Northway without metering, it could result in more congestion.

A high end Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative that utilizes existing infrastructure with minimal improvements should be considered.

**Comment: Phil Pearson, Town of Colonie:**

It appears that impacts to agricultural land are identified for each alternative, but it doesn't seem that preservation of agricultural land is considered as importantly as preservation of wetlands.

**Question/Comment: Matt Brower, NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets:**

Do the right of way impacts to agricultural land include the area of land to which access has been cut off by proposed ramps? If not, this should be considered during preliminary design.

**Response: Lee Ecker, CHA:**

The right of way impacts listed in the CAS include the footprint of the proposed ramps only.

**Response: Angelo Trichilo, NYSDOT:**

Alternatives for providing access or acquiring right of way will be considered during preliminary design as the alternatives are refined.

**Comment: Mary Brizzell, Town of Colonie:**

The Town does not support alternatives with agricultural impacts that would jeopardize the Engel's Farm business.

**Comment: Robert Mitchell, Town of Colonie:**

Construction of bridges across Albany-Shaker Road could have a significant impact on the Town's water and sanitary sewer lines. This should be considered when evaluating alternatives.

**Comment: John Poorman, CDTC:**

It may not be in the best interest of the project to identify the best transportation project or alternative which minimizes impacts. The alternatives selected for further consideration should balance the transportation needs with project impacts.

The construction costs shown in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document are a few years old and do not include right-of-way costs, engineering costs or construction inspection costs. The costs shown in the document should be multiplied by a factor of 2.5 to account for right-of-way, engineering, and construction inspection. High cost alternatives may not be feasible because of funding constraints.

**Response: Angelo Trichilo, NYSDOT:**

The construction costs included in the Conceptual Alternative Screening document should be used for relative comparison purposes only.

**Comment: Ron Laberge, Village of Colonie:**

The Village's primary concern is the impact of construction to neighborhoods adjacent to the project area, such as Sunset Terrace.

Please report any additions or corrections in writing within ten calendar days to the undersigned at Clough, Harbour and Associates LLP.

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Lisa M. Westrick, P.E.  
Project Engineer

LMW/dcc  
c: Attendees  
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## **Summary of Comments (10-11-07 Agency Meeting)**

### **US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) offered the following comments:**

***Comment 1:** Will the Maxwell Road project and other I-87 projects in this area be tied into the proposed project?*

**Response:** The Maxwell Road Project, proposed roundabout at the Watervliet-Shaker Road / Old Wolf Road / Old Niskayuna Road intersection, and nearby I-87 projects such as the reconstruction of Exit 6 are all separate projects and are not linked to the Exit 3/4 project. The traffic analyses for the feasible alternatives will include the proposed improvements at these locations and will incorporate impacts to the traffic network resulting from these improvements as forecasted by CDTC's regional traffic model.

***Comment 2:** How realistic are all of the acquisitions listed (being the most of all alternatives) for the Replace Exit 4 Alternative?*

**Response:** The extent of impacts will be evaluated in more detail during preliminary design. The acquisitions listed in the Range of Alternatives provides closer to a "worst case" scenario for acquisitions.

***Comment 3:** Is there a good record of the alternatives that were rejected to date and why. Often it seems that they get brought up later on in the process by the public or a reviewing agency (like the USFWS) and none of us knew it was considered before.*

**Response:** A document will be prepared and distributed to the agencies summarizing the range of concepts developed, the screening criteria used to dismiss concepts, the reasons why concepts were eliminated, and the feasible alternatives selected for further consideration in preliminary design. This document will be distributed to the Cooperating and Participating agencies and included as an appendix in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

### **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offered the following comments:**

***Comment 1:** The Draft Purpose and Need Statement (PN) should present the traffic volumes that travel between I-87 and the Albany International Airport, and the routes utilized. Without that information, it is unclear as to whether a new connector to the airport is needed and/or whether existing traffic volumes and service levels in the project area are due to airport traffic.*

**Response:** Figures showing the AM/PM peak hour traffic volumes and trip distribution percentages for airport related traffic have been added to the Purpose & Need Statement. However, we note that the Purpose & Need does not identify that a new connector to the airport is a project need. Rather, the Purpose & Need identifies that *improved access* to the airport is needed; improvements other than a new connector may be sufficient to improve access. Also note that the existing traffic volumes and levels of service in the project area are due to not only airport traffic, but also traffic related to Wolf Road and Albany Shaker Road.

***Comment 2:** All airport traffic should be identified as either truck (cargo) or automobile traffic. This will help define what kind of connector road may be needed.*

**Response:** The traffic data identifies the percentage of trucks on the roadways in the project area. The breakdown of truck versus automobile traffic must consider all traffic on all of the project area roadways, not only traffic associated with the airport.

***Comment 3:** Tables 1, 2, and 3 present traffic service levels with the year 2000 as the existing condition. These tables should be updated to the latest year the traffic data exists.*

**Response:** The Department recognizes the need for updated traffic data. New traffic counts were completed at select locations throughout the study area in 2006. These counts confirmed that the traffic is growing at the anticipated rate and the conditions shown based on year 2000 traffic counts are still valid (or in any event no better). Updated traffic data will be developed during preliminary design and provided

## **Summary of Comments (10-11-07 Agency Meeting)**

in the environmental document; however, we feel the data provided is sufficient for the Purpose & Need Statement.

**Comment 4:** *Table 4 presents year 2000 crash data for several intersections in the project area. This data should be updated.*

**Response:** The Department recognizes the need for updated crash data, and updated crash data will be obtained during preliminary design. However, we feel the data provided is sufficient for the Purpose & Need Statement.

**Comment 5:** *On page 10 of the PN, please compare the existing sufficiency ratings to acceptable or expected ratings for those facilities.*

**Response:** A comparison will be provided in the Purpose & Need.

**Comment 6:** *All maps and diagrams in the Range of Alternatives documents should be labeled.*

**Response:** The maps and diagram labels have been revised in the updated Range of Alternatives document.

**Comment 7:** *Without the appropriate origin/destination data for vehicles using I-87 and Exits 3 and 4, it is difficult to determine whether the range of alternatives is appropriate for the purpose and need.*

**Response:** The Department has prepared a document summarizing all of the concepts considered to date along with a summary of why alternatives have been dismissed. A copy of this document will be distributed to the Cooperating and Participating agencies and included as an appendix in the DEIS.

### **NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *SHPO recommends that a Phase 1B archaeological investigation be undertaken within the project's APE. The project should be designed to avoid or minimize effects to archaeological resources.*

**Response:** As recommended a Phase 1B archaeological investigation will be undertaken within the proposed footprint of the feasible alternatives and the results documented in the DEIS. As with all Department projects, measures to avoid impacts to archaeological resources will be evaluated and incorporated wherever possible; where impacts can not be avoided, measures to minimize impacts will be made. Analyses of these measures to avoid and then minimize impacts will be made during development of the alternatives for the DEIS.

**Comment 2:** *Identify all historic buildings on maps illustrating alternatives.*

**Response:** Historic structures identified in the project study area (PSA) will be shown on project mapping after the Phase 1A study is completed in preliminary design.

### **NYS Department of Environmental Conservation offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *The Replace Exit 4 Alternative should be reexamined for changes that could improve the design and reduce its cost.*

**Response:** Each of the feasible alternatives will be refined during preliminary design to minimize environmental impacts, reduce costs, and improve traffic operations. This could include, but is not limited to, different intersection types, such as signalized or a roundabout, or retaining or removing existing ramps.



## **Summary of Comments (10-11-07 Agency Meeting)**

**Comment 2:** *The lands on the east side of I-87 (Northway), behind the Homewood Suites facility, which would be impacted by the Exit 4 Upgrade Alternative may be federal wetlands.*

**Response:** Thank you for pointing out this area. A wetland delineation will be completed within the project area during preliminary design. As alternatives are designed in more detail, they will be designed to avoid wetlands to the extent practicable.

**Comment 3:** *The Partial Interchange Alternative needs to be evaluated for potential direct impacts to State Wetland A-10 and for habitat fragmentation.*

**Response:** Field investigations will be conducted within the project area for each of the feasible alternatives during preliminary design. These investigations will include a wetland delineation and identification of wildlife habitat. As alternatives are designed in more detail, they will be designed to avoid wetlands and habitat areas to the extent practicable.

**Comment 4:** *- It is not clear if the proposed configuration at the end of the Partial Interchange Alternative on/off ramp that will connect with Albany-Shaker Road would require a traffic signal or a roundabout.*

**Response:** The type of intersection will be determined during preliminary design based on environmental impacts, traffic operations, safety, etc.

**Comment 5:** *The planning and design for this project should focus on alternatives that not only improve access and meet the measures of effectiveness, but also ones that meet state and federal regulatory standards and criteria to avoid and minimize the filling of wetlands and wetland adjacent area.*

**Response:** In addition to fulfilling the project objectives, there are some standard considerations that are evaluated for every state and federal project. These include avoiding and minimizing impacts to the existing environmental features within the project area. The preferred alternative should have a balance between minimizing impacts and meeting the project objectives which include improving access.

**Comment 6:** *The alternative chosen must avoid bisecting and fragmenting the large block of open land and its associated wetlands and protect the ecological integrity of the adjacent areas.*

**Response:** The feasible alternatives will be refined during preliminary design to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the existing environmental features in the project area. This includes avoiding bisecting the open space between the Northway, Albany-Shaker Road, and Ann Lee Pond. The Exit 3 Interchange Alternative has been dismissed due to its potential impacts to bisect and fragment this area.

**Comment 7:** *NYSDEC recommends the project should focus on the Exit 4 Upgrade, Replace Exit 4 and Partial Interchange alternatives as they would have the least wetland / habitat impacts. With more information, the New Exit 4 alternative may also be part of this group as well.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The Exit 3 Interchange and New Exit 4 Interchange Alternatives have been dismissed due to their higher potential for wetland and habitat impacts.

### **US ACOE and NYS DEC offered the following comment:**

**Comment 1:** *It is recommended that the Exit 3 alternative not be further considered because of the potential for significant wetland impacts.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The Exit 3 Alternative has been dismissed due to environmental impacts.

## **Summary of Comments (10-11-07 Agency Meeting)**

### **Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *The Purpose & Need Statement seems to treat traffic service and capacity objectives as considerably more important than everything else. An alternative optimized for the traffic service objectives might be more costly and miss opportunities for environmental enhancement. Rephrase the Project Need Statement to read “improve access” rather than “address deficiencies” so that the needs all carry equal importance.*

**Response:** Project needs 4 and 5 will be reworded to read “Improve access...” rather than “Address deficiencies in access...”

**Comment 2:** *The Level-of-Service analysis in the Purpose and Need Statement identifies deficient intersections as those operating at LOS E or worse, but the region's Congestion Management System Plan allows Level-of-Service E or F under certain circumstances. Rephrase the LOS criteria to allow for a lower level-of-service that could avoid undesirable impacts on environmental and cultural resources.*

**Response:** As stated in the NYSDOT Highway Design Manual, Level-of-Service (LOS) C or better is desirable and LOS D is the minimum for the design year of a non-interstate project. A lower LOS may be agreed to on some projects, especially in urban areas, due to social, economic, and environmental and/or policy/intergovernmental decisions made during the project scoping and design; however, the LOS must be treated as a non-standard feature on interstates and interstate ramps and as a non-conforming feature on non-interstate roadways. The non-standard or non-conforming LOS must be explained as appropriate in the design approval document. Therefore, the goal of the project is to achieve a LOS D or better for the design year; accepting lower LOS will be addressed after traffic modeling is complete if a lower LOS is ultimately agreed to.

**Comment 3:** *Does the analysis for NY 7/Exit 6 reflect the single point urban interchange?*

**Response:** The analysis shown reflects the traffic volumes provided by CDTC, which we do not believe includes a single point urban interchange (SPUI) at Exit 6. Future traffic analyses that are completed during preliminary design will include replacement of the I-87 Exit 6 interchange with a SPUI.

**Comment 4:** *It appears that the Albany Shaker Road/Maxwell Road analysis was done for a signalized intersection. It should reflect roundabout control.*

**Response:** Analysis for this intersection will include roundabout control for the future years after which construction of the roundabout is anticipated to be complete.

**Comment 5:** *CDTC is pleased that context sensitive design treatments will be integrated into this project.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 6:** *Involving the public beyond a few informational meetings would allow for more meaningful participation, open collaboration, and exchange of ideas among NYSDOT, the Project Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders.*

**Response:** The Department feels that the Project Advisory Committee meetings that have been held, the additional agency meetings held, the web site, and the public meetings identified in the Coordination Plan are a sufficient means for open collaboration and gathering input on this project. Also note that the events identified in the Coordination Plan are milestones. The option exists to hold additional meetings if necessary.

**Comment 7:** *Wouldn't CDTC's regional planning responsibility and traffic forecasting role make it a Cooperating Agency?*

**Response:** In accordance with CEQ (40 CFR 1508.5), “cooperating agency” means any Federal agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. A State or local agency of similar qualifications, by agreement with the lead agencies, also can serve as a cooperating agency.

## **Summary of Comments (10-11-07 Agency Meeting)**

Participating agencies are those with an interest in the project. The roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies are similar, but cooperating agencies have specific authority, such as permit jurisdiction. Distinguishing features of cooperating agencies include that they can assume, upon the request of the lead agency, responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the EIS. Cooperating agencies may also adopt, without re-circulating, the EIS of a lead agency.

FHWA and NYSDOT feel it is appropriate that CDTC remain a participating agency for the proposed project because it does not have permitting jurisdiction over any portion of the proposed project and is not required to complete its own EIS. Remaining a participating agency does not diminish CDTC's role in the project's EIS approval process. CDTC will continue to be involved with development of the project alternatives, receive information provided to all of the cooperating and participating agencies, and receive requests for input on project alternatives and their effects on the environmental features in the project area in addition to providing traffic forecasts for no-build and build conditions.

***Comment 9:*** *Each of the alternatives should show design treatments that address the environment, transit access, bikeability, walkability, overall quality of life, etc., in addition to access features right from the start.*

**Response:** Although the alternatives have not been evaluated to a level of detail that would include the treatments noted, context sensitive design elements will be considered in all of the feasible alternatives, and these features will be evaluated in the project's DEIS for the alternatives that have been selected for further study. Identifying all of these features during Scoping requires a much greater level of detail than the Department feels is necessary to evaluate the concepts.

***Comment 7:*** *Do you have any plans to share comments among PAC members?*

**Response:** This letter provides a summary of cooperating and participating agency comments and responses.

### **Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) offered the following comments:**

***Comment 1:*** *The project is a perfect opportunity to consider a creation of a new park-and-ride lot in the Airport Area to help to further enhance existing transit system and benefits created by it.*

**Response:** A park-and-ride facility is not consistent with the purpose and need for this project. Consequently, we can not commit project resources for a park-and-ride facility at this time.

***Comment 2:*** *CDTA is concerned how the proposed project and construction process associated with it will affect the existing transit services and transit infrastructure in the project area.*

**Response:** The Department will work with CDTA staff to minimize disruptions to the existing transit services and infrastructure during construction of the proposed project. The Department will incorporate reasonable measures to minimize temporary effects on transit into the contract plans.

### **CDTA and CDTC offered the following comment:**

***Comment 3:*** *CDTA and CDTC are concerned that the cost of some of the alternatives could jeopardize other transportation improvement plans in the Capital Region. CDTA and CDTC feel that cost should be a critical criteria when selecting alternative to pursue and a statement regarding budget should be included in the Purpose and Need Statement.*

**Response:** While not the only criteria used to select a preferred alternative, cost is an important factor that will be considered during the selection process and documented, along with the engineering and environmental considerations, in the DEIS.

## **Summary of Comments (10-11-07 Agency Meeting)**

### **The Town of Colonie offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *The Draft Purpose and Need Statement is acceptable.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 2:** *The proposed roundabout at the Watervliet-Shaker Road / Old Wolf Road / Old Niskayuna Road intersection should be included in future traffic analyses.*

**Response:** Future traffic analyses will include the proposed roundabout at the Watervliet-Shaker Road / Old Wolf Road / Old Niskayuna Road intersection. This project is currently under design by NYSDOT Region 1 under P.I.N. 1132.15.

**Comment 3:** *Infrastructure (Water and Sanitary Sewer) impacts will occur for any bridges proposed over existing Albany-Shaker Road.*

**Response:** The Department will meet with the Town during preliminary design to determine the extent of impacts to existing water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Impacts to existing infrastructure will be documented in the DEIS.

**Comment 4:** *The Town of Colonie will not support any alternative that has a major impact on agricultural properties in the subject area.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The Exit 3 Alternative and New Exit 4 Alternatives, which included significant impacts to agricultural property, have been dismissed due to environmental impacts.

**Comment 5:** *It appears that references to the Homewood Suites should be to the Best Western Motel.*

**Response:** The Commercial, Social, and Economic Impacts will be revised.

**Comment 6:** *ROW costs should be provided in the approximate costs.*

**Response:** The purpose of the scoping process is to review the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the alternatives and then the order of magnitude costs. As each feasible alternative is refined, efforts will be made to minimize right-of-way impacts. Right-of-way costs will be estimated during preliminary design and documented in the DEIS.

**Comment 7:** *The Town of Colonie recommends the Exit 3 Alternative.*

**Response:** The Exit 3 Alternative has been dismissed due to environmental impacts including its potential impacts to State Wetland A-10 and agricultural property, and its potential to bisect and fragment the open space between the Northway, Albany-Shaker Road, and Ann Lee Pond.

## SUMMARY OF MEETING

PIN 1721.51

### Scoping and Highway Design Services Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3/4 Access Improvements Town of Colonie, Albany County

**Date:** April 2, 2009

**Place:** Town of Colonie Public Operations Building

**Time:** 10:00 AM

**CHA File:** 9456

#### Attendees:

Jim Bridges	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
Angelo Trichilo	NYSDOT
John Masse	NYSDOT
Tom Kligerman	NYSDOT
Dan Gates	NYSDOT
Bob Davies	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Roslyn Webber	FHWA
Mila Vega	Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
Dave Jukins	Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Chris O'Neill	CDTC
Sree Nampoothiri	CDTC
Michael Franchini	Albany County Department of Public Works
John O'Donnell	Albany County Airport Authority
Stephen Iachetta	Albany County Airport Authority
Bob Mitchell	Town of Colonie
Lee Ecker	CHA
Lisa Westrick	CHA

#### PURPOSE:

This meeting was held to discuss the feasible alternatives which will be considered during preliminary design, review the decision making process, and review the coordination process. Questions and/or comments were received following the presentation. These are summarized below.

**Bob Davies:** Approval of interchange justification cannot happen until after NEPA is complete. Approval can be granted concurrently with Record of Decision (ROD).

**Dave Jukins:** Replacement of the I-87 bridges over Albany-Shaker Road is not on the TIP yet.  
**Angelo Trichilo:** This replacement is already on the NYSDOT program.

**Bob Davies:** Alternatives presented as feasible alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) must be those that NYSDOT is willing to build. At that point, agencies will select the least environmentally damaging.

**Tom Kligerman:** NYSDOT will first evaluate the alternatives based on traffic, and some may be eliminated prior to the DEIS.

**Mike Franchini:** Albany County is waiting to construct a project on Old Wolf Road until a decision is made on the Exit 3/4 project. The County has funding for this project.

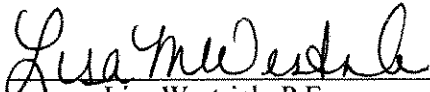


Summary of Meeting  
Interstate 87 (I-87) Exit 3/4 Access Improvements

April 2, 2009

- Jim Bridges:** Develop cost estimates using a low and high estimate of inflation. Project cost estimates should be shown as a range.
- Dave Jukins:** We need to know about the proposed bicycle / pedestrian facilities and transit facilities early in the project.
- Dave Jukins:** The alternatives don't need to meet all objectives 100%.
- Jim Bridges:** Agreed.
- Bob Davies:** If you intend to add a new interchange, first you must show that you can't meet the project objectives by upgrading the existing interchange. And you must demonstrate that the local street network can support a new interchange.
- Mike Franchini:** Can we really not preclude all of the options for future potential I-87 improvements? Has this been done with other projects?
- Jim Bridges:** Yes, the Exit 6 SPUI was designed that way. It is a matter of providing a certain width.
- John O'Donnell:** Can you provide more information about the SPUI?
- Jim Bridges:** Yes, more information is available on the Exit 6 website.
- Bob Davies:** In looking at an Exit 4 SPUI, you will need to demonstrate why an additional ramp to the south is needed and if it is, show weaving analysis.
- Dave Jukins:** CDTC Planning & Policy Committees do not have an understanding that replacement of the Exit 4 bridges is included in this project.
- Dave Jukins:** CDTC would like to see the cost of replacing the Exit 4 bridges only.
- Mila Vega:** It would be helpful to see what is included with TSM and TDM.
- Mike Franchini:** It would be beneficial for NYSDOT to make a presentation to the CDTC Planning and Policy Committees.

Please report any additions or corrections in writing within ten calendar days to the undersigned at CHA.

  
Lisa Westrick, P.E.  
Project Engineer

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## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

### **US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *Upgrade Alternative: There was not a lot of detailed information provided to justify the elimination of these alternatives which have the least estimated amount of impacts to aquatic resources (about 1.1 acres and 2.3 acres of wetlands). During our review of a permit application to determine if the project that is eventually proposed meets the Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) Guidelines, more detailed information would be needed to determine that these alternatives are not practicable per the Guidelines.*

**Response:** The primary objectives of the proposed project include improving intersection operating conditions in the Exit 4 area and addressing safety concerns in the areas that exceed the statewide average crash rate for similar transportation facilities. The Upgrade Alternative has been dismissed because it does not address safety concerns in the Exit 4 area. Accident data collected between January 2007 and December 2009 for the Exit 4 area indicates that clusters of accidents have occurred on the Exit 4 SB Exit Ramp as well as at the Albany-Shaker Road intersections with Old Wolf Road and Wolf Road. The Upgrade Alternative provides the least amount of traffic operational improvements while increasing the size of many of the study area intersections. These concerns are discussed below.

**Comment 2:** *Upgrade Alternative: Does the Option A version of this alternative also sever the direct connection that the Town of Colonie needs for emergency response?*

**Response:** No, the Upgrade Alternative – Option A does not sever access along Old Wolf Road. This option includes replacement of the existing Albany-Shaker Road / Old Wolf Road intersection with a two lane roundabout. The only work proposed on Old Wolf Road in this alternative is on the approach to the roundabout.

**Comment 3:** *Upgrade Alternative: What other specific safety concerns would not be satisfied and what public interest concerns were raised that brought you to the point of dismissing the alternative?*

**Response:** The VISSIM analyses indicate that the Upgrade Alternative would result in two intersections with approaches that will operate below a LOS “D” during the design year (ETC+20), the Old Wolf Road / CD Road and the Albany-Shaker Road / Old Wolf Road intersections. These intersections both currently experience a high number of accidents. The majority of accidents reviewed occurred during peak hours and are congestion related. The lower levels of service indicate that congestion in the project area would still be present. Therefore, the congestion related safety concerns will not be addressed by this alternative.

The Upgrade Alternative does not include any specific improvements to address the safety concerns at the Exit 4 area intersections. Since the alternative does not divert traffic from existing roadways, this alternative would not reduce queuing at the existing intersections or ramps. The Upgrade Alternative would, however, increase the number of lanes at these intersections to accommodate future traffic volumes. The result would be increased traffic volumes at larger intersection which could result in additional conflict between vehicles at locations where accidents are already an issue.

Specifically, the Upgrade Alternative does nothing to address the backups that occur on the Exit 4 southbound exit ramp. These backups often extend from the intersection with Old Wolf Road all the way to the I-87 mainline. Lanes cannot be added on this ramp due to the weaving that must occur between traffic exiting I-87 and traffic entering from the Exit 5 southbound on ramp. Since the Upgrade Alternative will also not divert traffic from the Exit 4 southbound exit ramp, the backups that occur on the ramp will not be addressed by this alternative.

## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

**Comment 4:** *Upgrade Alternative: Finally, both note minimal traffic operation improvements, but are they acceptable in terms of the basic project purpose? This type of detail would help us make a permit decision when that time comes.*

**Response:** The primary objectives of the proposed project include improving access between I-87 SB and Wolf Road and I-87 NB and the Albany International Airport. In addition, NYSDOT's recommended desirable level of service for ETC +20 conditions for signalized intersections is LOS "C" and the minimum acceptable is LOS "D".

The VISSIM analyses for ETC+20 indicate that the Upgrade Alternative will result in 1 intersection that operates at a LOS "D" and two approaches that will operate below a LOS "D" during the peak hours. All intersections in the other alternatives presented operate at a LOS "C" or better during the peak hours. The Upgrade Alternative provides the lowest level of improvements and does not meet the minimum LOS design criteria at some locations.

It is also important to note that the traffic forecasts for ETC+20 include very little growth. Therefore, even modest growth above the little growth included in the forecasts may result in LOS conditions below the design criteria at additional locations.

In addition, the Upgrade Alternative offers only an average reduction in travel time for the major movements through the study area of 11% while the other alternatives result in an average reduction in travel time of 30%. This alternative provides the least amount of improvement to traffic operations in the project study area. In addition, the Upgrade Alternative does not meet the safety objectives of the project since it does not include geometric improvements which would divert traffic, reduce queues, or reduce the number of conflict points at the existing intersections within the study area.

**Comment 5:** *SPUI Alternative: This alternative had the largest amount of estimated impacts to aquatic resources. If these resources have the same or greater functions and services as the aquatic resources in the alternatives that continue to be pursued, then it seems appropriate to not pursue this alternative in terms of the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit application review.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 6:** *SPUI Alternative: Can you provide more details on the specific public safety concerns that would be presented with the closure of Old Wolf Road?*

**Response:** The Town of Colonie has raised objections to this alternative because it would increase travel times for emergency response services, located at the north end of Old Wolf Road, to Albany-Shaker Road and points south. The existing access is provided along Old Wolf Road; however, if this connection was removed (as proposed under the SPUI Alternative) emergency vehicles originating at the Town of Colonie Public Safety building on Old Wolf Road would need to travel north to Watervliet-Shaker Road and use I-87 southbound at Exit 5 or Old Niskayuna Road to travel south to Albany-Shaker Road and Wolf Road.



## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

**Comment 7:** *Original Diamond Alternative: Elimination of this alternative to avoid adverse impacts to the Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve seems appropriate. As a recommendation for all alternatives dismissed along the way, including versions of the two alternatives being pursued (and how the selected alternative is further refined over time to minimize impacts), please consider retaining and sharing with us detailed documentation on the rationale for their dismissal as it will be helpful when we are reviewing the permit application.*

**Response:** The original Diamond Alternative has been dismissed because of its impacts to Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve. To avoid impacts to the preserve a modified version of this alternative was developed. The VISSIM results for the Modified Diamond Alternative indicate that it operates as well as the original alternative; however, impacts to the preserve are eliminated.

In addition, the modified version of this alternative eliminates the need for an intersection within the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) for the Runway 1 Approach at the Connector Road and Albany-Shaker Road. Some uses are permitted within the RPZ provided they do not attract wildlife, are outside the Object Free Area, and do not interfere with navigational aids. Placement of a signalized intersection at this location could present a safety concern by conflicting with navigational aids on the Runway 1 Approach. An intersection within the RPZ could also present a safety concern if vehicles begin to queue on the intersection approaches. The Modified Diamond Alternative eliminates this safety issue by locating the proposed intersection out of the RPZ.

**Comment 8:** *Two Alternatives Being Pursued: Currently, both alternatives propose a similar amount of impacts to wetlands/aquatic resources, and it appears that the Flyover Alternative costs less and has the most public support, while both achieve the project objectives. According to your schedule presented at the meeting, a delineation of waters of the United States (and State) is being conducted now and will be submitted to us for verification this summer. Our review of the delineation for accuracy will enable us to provide even more feedback on the two alternatives being considered. In addition, we recommend that the wetland types be identified at this time (forested and type of forest, scrub shrub, emergent, dominance of invasive species in wetlands), and the aquatic resources be assessed in terms of their functions and services. The significance of the resources in comparison to each other should also help drive selection of alternatives and refinement of design to minimize impacts to aquatic resources to meet the 404(b)(1) Guidelines.*

**Response:** The wetland delineation is underway. A copy of the Wetland Delineation Report will be provided to you when it is complete. The delineation report will include identification of wetland types, functions, and services.

**Comment 9:** *Mitigation: John Connell of our office provided general guidance on mitigation requirements during the meeting held on June 1, 2011. Specifically, he discussed ratios for the establishment / restoration of wetlands in relation to the amount of loss and impact to particular wetland types. He also stated that we would consider other mitigation alternatives and requirements (i.e. other ratios, other types of mitigation such as enhancement, flexibilities in location), particularly when they are accompanied by a quantitative functional assessment method demonstrating functional replacement for proposed impacts. I would refer you to our current mitigation guidelines (33 CFR Part 332) on how to approach mitigation for impacts to waters of the United States; and point out that impacts to other types of aquatic resources have not been identified for any alternatives that have been considered to date. This includes streams, which are identified as difficult to replace in our mitigation guidelines. Please be sure that the delineation being conducted also includes streams and other open waters.*

**Response:** The delineation will include streams and other open waters. Potential mitigation measures will be identified in the DEIS, and current mitigation guidelines will be consulted during the selection of proposed mitigation measures.

## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

***Comment 10:** Other: Based upon the materials provided, it appears that the ability to construct the project in phases is an important factor in the selection of alternatives. Can you provide a more detailed discussion as to why phased construction is so important?*

**Response:** Phased construction is an important factor under consideration due to limits in available funding for construction of the proposed project. Due to limits on available funding, the Department of Transportation's current program includes replacement of the I-87 bridges over Albany Shaker Road as the first phase of the project and construction of the remainder of the project in a subsequent phase when funding becomes available. Therefore, it is desirable for alternatives to be able to be constructed in phases as funding becomes available while still providing incremental traffic benefits. In the case of the SPUI Alternative, since the bridge structures over Albany-Shaker Road are longer to accommodate the SPUI underneath on Albany-Shaker Road, construction of the bridges affects a greater length of I-87 and also would necessitate construction of the new ramps. Since replacement of the bridge(s) over Albany-Shaker Road would require reconstruction of the Exit 4 Ramps, construction of this alternative cannot be staged. The other alternatives presented could all be constructed in phases as funding becomes available.

***Comment 11:** I am certain our comments will be more detailed as we go along since the review area would be delineated, and we'll know more about the types of aquatic resources that could be impacted by the alternatives and their functions, we'll know more about the minimum design specifications that will help drive the actual design of the project and opportunities to further reduce wetland and/or stream impacts, and based on that, we will also be able to provide more specific feedback on compensatory mitigation requirements.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

### **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offered the following comments:**

***Comment 1:** Received meeting documents and presentation and do not have any comments on the alternatives or the preferred alternative.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) offered the following comments:**

***Comment 1:** The FAA would prefer an alternative, such as Alternatives 1, 1A, or 4, that keeps the majority of the construction outside of the Runway 1/19 RPZ and approach/departure surfaces for safety reasons. We have nothing in our guidance or orders that precludes the advancement of Alternative 3; however, and we note that these alternatives have already been dismissed from further consideration.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

***Comment 2:** Per FAA AC 1505300-13, Airport Design, paragraph 212, it is desirable to clear all objects from the RPZ; however some uses are permitted provided they do not attract wildlife, are outside the Object Free Area, and do not interfere with navigational aids. Seeing as Albany Shaker Road currently crosses the RPZ for the Runway 1 Approach and the proposed traffic light under Alternative 3 is outside the OFA, the proposed location does not violate any of our standards for the RPZ.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

**Comment 3:** *The construction of the interchange will occur underneath the extended approach and departure surfaces for Runway 1/19 in close proximity to the extended centerline for the runway. The proposal should be subject to an OE review and would require the submittal of FAA Form 7460 for both the design and construction of the interchange. It would be helpful to see the current design elevations of the roadway and any fixtures, including road lights and directional signage. The construction plan needs to be coordinated separately based on the types of equipment (i.e. cranes) required during construction and their potential impacts to the operations at ALB.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The preliminary roadway design is currently being completed. Preliminary design elevations along the roadway can be provided at 100 ft intervals once the design is complete. Elevations for roadway signage and lighting will be determined during final design.

**Comment 4:** *We request that you continue to coordinate with the FAA as the design is advanced and throughout the proposed construction period to ensure that any impacts to operations at ALB are considered and mitigated to the extent practicable.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The Department of Transportation will continue to coordinate with FAA throughout design.

### **NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *SHPO believes the recommendations contained within the report to be reasonable. However, we await the arrival of the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to determine the extent and treatment of the cultural resources that may be impacted as a result of the project. Please forward the DEIS once the material becomes available so that we can continue to complete our review of this project.*

**Response:** A Phase IB survey is currently underway to identify potential impacts to cultural resources. A copy of the DEIS will be distributed when complete.

### **NYS Department of Environmental Conservation offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *We understand that the NY office of the FHWA has determined that the project is a reconstruction of the existing I-87 Exit 4 Interchange of the Adirondack Northway. As a result of this determination, the alternatives have been modified to incorporate removal of existing ramps and traffic models have been completed for the alternatives based on these modifications.*

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 2:** *It is our understanding that the necessary archeological studies and investigations have not yet been undertaken and that FHWA will assume the lead role pursuant to Section 106.*

**Response:** A Phase IA survey was completed by the NYS Museum and a summary of the findings included in the NEPA Scoping Report (January 2009). A Phase IB survey is currently underway to identify potential impacts to historical and cultural resources. A summary of the findings will be included in the DEIS.

**Comment 3:** *It is requested that as planning progresses and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is prepared that impacts to Freshwater Wetland adjacent areas also be calculated and taken into consideration when evaluating these impacts. A breakdown of vegetative cover types within the adjacent areas should be provided along with a discussion of the functions that the adjacent area provides.*

**Response:** The wetland delineation is underway. The delineation report will include identification of freshwater wetland adjacent areas and their vegetative cover types and functions. A summary of the delineation report will be included in the DEIS.

## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

**Comment 4:** - As we discuss, staff will explore wetland mitigation site alternatives and opportunities to compensate for wetland impacts associated with the project. Preference will be to explore options and possible mitigation sites within the Shaker Creek watershed, if possible. We look forward to working with you on such mitigation options and would welcome your comments on an acceptable timetable to investigate such options.

**Response:** Comment noted. Once wetland impacts have been identified, we will contact you to discuss potential mitigation site alternatives.

**Comment 5:** The Department supports elimination of the Diamond Alternative and the continued progression of the Flyover Alternative, which lessens the overall impacts to wetlands and the Ann Lee Pond and Preserve.

**Response:** Comment noted. The original Diamond Alternative has been modified to reduce impacts to the pond and preserve. The result, the Modified Diamond Alternative, is also being progressed and has similar impacts to Ann Lee Pond and the preserve as the Flyover Alternative.

### **Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** CDTA understands that alternatives to be moved forward will be the No-Build Alternative, the Diamond Alternative – Option A, and the Flyover Alternative, and we have no objections.

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 2:** We request that the selected design accommodate traffic traveling on Albany Shaker Road and under I-87 to access the Airport. CDTA is currently restructuring its Albany County route system, and preliminary plans call for increased service to the Airport using Albany Shaker Road. If the NYSDOT wants to actively contribute to a multimodal transportation system, we would welcome addition of transit signal priority at the intersections within the project area.

**Response:** As summarized in the travel time data provided subsequent to the 06/01/11 Agency Meeting, travel times along Albany-Shaker Road between Margaret Drive and the Airport are anticipated to decrease by an average of 18% during the peak hours for the Diamond and Flyover Alternatives when compared to the No-Build Alternative.

If appropriate, transit signal priority could be considered during preliminary and final design for the study area intersection along Albany-Shaker Road.

**Comment 3:** CDTA strongly encourages NYSDOT to include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations as part of the I-87 bridge replacements under this project.

**Response:** A secondary project objective is to improve system connectivity between the existing pedestrian / bicycle facilities on Wolf Road and the facilities constructed as part of the Albany / Watervliet-Shaker Road project. The Department of Transportation is currently exploring options to provide pedestrian / bicycle facilities along Albany-Shaker Road between Ann Lee Pond Nature and Historic Preserve and Wolf Road. The construction of the pedestrian / bicycle facilities will be coordinated with the construction phases of the overall project.

## **Summary of Comments (06-01-11 Agency Meeting)**

### **The Town of Colonie offered the following comments:**

**Comment 1:** *There is a pressurized sewer lateral from the Desmond Hotel in the vicinity of the southern abutments of the I-87 bridges over Albany-Shaker Road which may be impacted by the Flyover and Diamond Alternatives; however, there is a possibility of relocating this sanitary lateral to a newer sewer system on the north side of Albany-Shaker Road and eliminating the line under the bridge.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The existing pressurized lateral and any proposed impacts will be identified on the project plans. The proposed feasible alternatives will attempt to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the existing sewer lateral.

**Comment 2:** *There is a pressurized sewer main along the northern edge of Albany-Shaker Road from the Hotel Indigo towards the airport along with pressurized lateral services for facilities on the north side of Albany-Shaker Road which should be considered if any grading or improvements are scheduled for this side of the road.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The existing pressurized sewer main and any proposed impacts will be identified on the project plans. The proposed feasible alternatives will attempt to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the existing sewer main.

**Comment 3:** *The septic systems for 696 and 698 Albany-Shaker Road will need to be removed under the Flyover and Diamond Alternatives.*

**Response:** Comment noted. The DEIS will include documentation of the required removal of the existing septic systems, and this work will be included in the final design plans as necessary.

**Comment 4:** *A 10 inch ductile iron pipe sewer main exists in an easement parallel and adjacent to the western side of Wolf Road in front of the Hess gas station; however, it does not appear that this line will be impacted by the new intersection with the exception of possible adjustment to existing manholes outside of the pavement limits.*

**Response:** The existing sewer main and any proposed impacts will be identified on the project plans. The proposed feasible alternatives will attempt to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the existing sewer main.

**Comment 5:** *There is a lateral service for the Hess gas station that will need to be removed as part of the Diamond Alternative.*

**Response:** The DEIS will include documentation of the required removal of the existing sewer lateral and this work will be included in the final design plans as necessary.



## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TO DATE**

The public involvement for the project is summarized below:

### **November 15, 2001:**

A Public Information Open House was held on November 15, 2001 from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM at the Sand Creek Middle School Auditorium, 329 Sand Creek Road, Colonie, New York. Individual mailers were sent out to approximately thirteen hundred residents and businesses within the project area. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting.

The meeting included an Open House session from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM where attendees were able to review displays showing conceptual alternatives, and to discuss the project individually with NYS Department of Transportation staff. A technical presentation was given by the project design consultant, Clough, Harbour and Associates LLP from 7:00 PM to 7:30 PM, followed by a formal question/comment session from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM. The meeting concluded with an additional Open House session from 8:30 PM to 9:00 PM.

### **December 5, 2001:**

As a result of the November 15, 2001 public meeting, the residents of the Sunset Boulevard neighborhood requested a meeting with NYSDOT representatives to discuss the proposed project. A neighborhood meeting was held on Wednesday, December 5th at 5:00 p.m. at 9 Aldershoot Road in the Sunset Boulevard neighborhood, located west of the Northway in between Exits 2 and 4. The meeting was arranged by Sig Peplowski, who attended the November 15 public meeting, at the urging of Aldershoot Road cul-de-sac neighbors who were unable to attend the public meeting.

Approximately 14 people were in attendance for a brief overview of the public presentation and conceptual alternatives developed.

### **December 2001:**

An internet web site for the project was developed and posted on the NYSDOT web site. The project web site includes an overview of the project history, project maps and photos, public involvement updates and a comment page with a direct e-mail link to the NYSDOT Project Manager.

### **October 24, 2007:**

A NEPA Scoping public information meeting was held for the public in October 2007 from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM at the Sand Creek Middle School Auditorium, 329 Sand Creek Road, Colonie, New York. Comments on the Range of Alternatives under consideration and the project Purpose and Need were accepted through November 2007.

### **August 22, 2013:**

A Public Information Meeting for Benefited Receptors of Proposed Noise Barrier was held on August 22, 2013 at 6:30 PM in the Stedman Room at the Sanford (Colonie Town) Library. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information regarding the proposed noise barrier and its impacts and obtain input from the benefited receptors. Responses were received from 58% of the benefited receptors with 80% of the responses in favor of constructing the proposed noise barriers.

